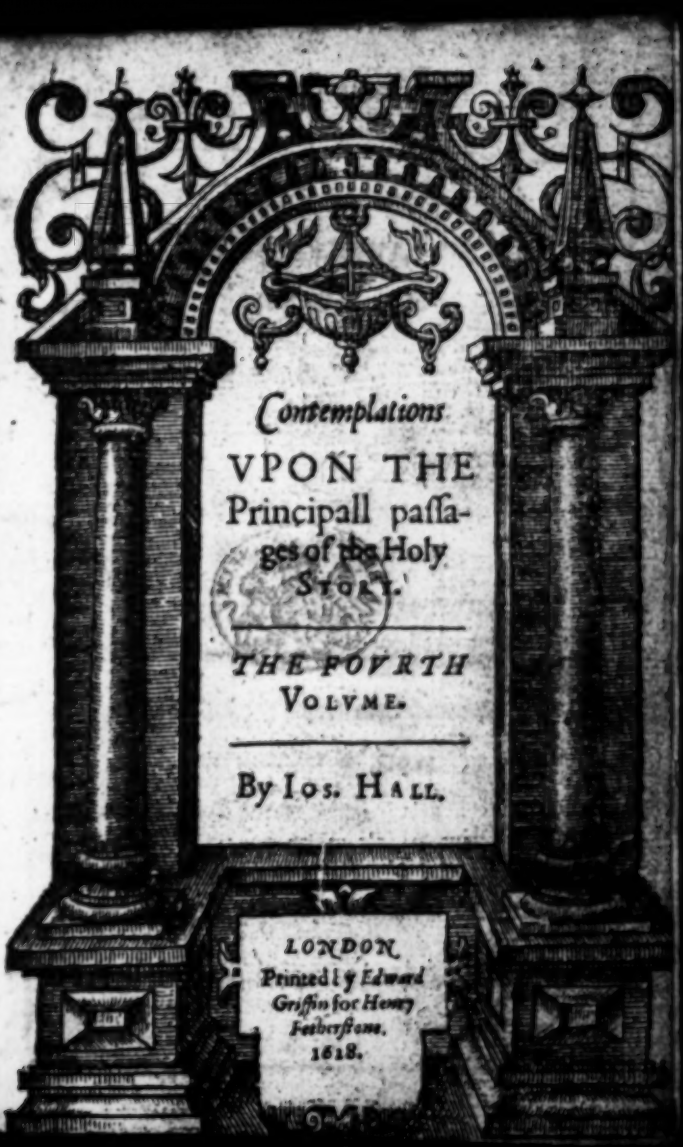
Contemplations
VPON THE
Principall passa-
ges of the Holy
STORY.
THE FOVRTH
VOLVME.
By Ios. HALL.
LONDON
Printed by Edward
Griffin for Henry
Fetherstone.
1618.

BRITISH MUSEUM

Contemplations.
THE TWELVTH BOOKE.

Contayning

The Arke and Dagon.
The Arkes Reuenge & Returne.
The Remoue of the Arke.
The meeting of Saul and Samuel.
The Inauguration of Saul.
Samuels Conteſtation.
Sauls ſacrifice.
Ionathans victory & Sauls oath.

THE TWENTY-FIFTH BOOK

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE, MY SINGVLAR GOOD LORD, the LORD HAY, Baron of SALEY, one of his Maieſties moſt Honorable Priuie COVNSELL.

RIGHT HO:

VPon how iuſt reaſon theſe my Contemplations goe forth ſo late after their fellowes, it were needleſſe to giue account to your LO: in whoſe trayne I had the honor (ſince my laſt) to paſſe both the SEA, and the TWEDE. All my priuate ſtudies haue gladly vayled to the publique ſeruices of my Soueraigne Maſter: No

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ſooner could I recouer the happineſſe of my quiet thoughts, then I renued this my diuine taske: Wherein I cannot but profeſſe to place ſo much contentment, as that I wiſh not any other meaſure of my life, then it; What is this other, then the exaltation of ISAACS delight to walke forth into the pleaſant fields of the Scriptures, and to meditate of nothing vnder heauen? Yea what other then IACOBS ſweet viſion of Angels, climbing vp and downe that ſacred ladder, which GOD hath ſet betwixt heauen and earth? Yea (to riſe yet hyer) what other then an imitation of holy MOYSES, in his conuerſing with GOD himſelfe, on the Horeb of both Teſtaments? And if I may call your LO: forth a litle from your great affaires of Court and State, to bleſſe your eyes with this proſpect, how happy ſhall you confeſſe this change of obiects? and how vnwillingly ſhall you obtaine leaue of your thoughts to returne vnto theſe ſublunary imployments? Our laſt diſcourſe left Gods ARKE amongſt the

the Philiſtims; now we returne to ſee what it doth there, and to fetch it thence: Wherein your LO: ſhall finde the reuenges of God neuer ſo deadly, as when he giues moſt way vnto men; The vaine confidence of wickednes ending in a late repentance; The fearefull plagues of a preſumptuous ſawcineſſe with God, not preuented with the honeſtie of good intentions; The mercy of God accepting the ſeruices of an humble faithfulnes in a meaner dreſſe. From thence you ſhall ſee the dangerous iſſue of an affected innouation, although to the better; The errors of credulitie, and blinde affection in the holieſt gouernors, guilty of the peoples diſcontentment; The ſtubburne heddineſſe of a multitude that once findes the reynes ſlacke in their necks, not capable of any pauſe, but their owne fall; The vntruſty promiſes of a faire outſide, and a plauſible entrance, ſhutting vp in a wofull diſappointment. What doe I foreſtall a diſcourſe ſo full of choyce; your LO: ſhall finde euery line vſefull, and ſhall

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willingly confesse that the story of God can make a man not lesse wise, then good.

Mine humble thankfullnes knowes not how to expresse it selfe otherwise, then in these kinde of presents, and in my hearty prayers for the increase of your Honor, and Happinesse, which shall neuer bee wanting from.

Your Lo: sincerely and thankfully deuoted,

IOS: HALL.

Contemplations.

THE ARKE and DAGON.

MEN could not ariſe to ſuch height of impiety, if they did not miſtake God: The acts of his iuſt iudgement are imputed to impotence; that God would

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would ſend his Arke captiue to the Philiſtims, is ſo conſtrued by them, as if he could not keep it: The wife of *Phinehas* cryed out, that glory was departed from Iſrael; The Philiſtims dare ſay in triumph, that glory is departed from the God of Iſrael; The Arke was not Iſraels, but Gods, this victory reaches higher then to men. Dagon had neuer ſo great a day, ſo many ſacrifices, as now that he ſeemes to take the God of Iſrael priſoner; Where ſhould the captiue be beſtowed, but in the cuſtodie of the Victor: It is not loue, but inſultation, that lodges the Arke cloſe beſide Dagon: What a ſpectacle was this, to ſee vncircumciſed

Philiſtims

Philiſtims laying their profane hands vpon the teſtimonie of Gods preſence? to ſee the glorious mercy ſeat vnder the roofe of an Idoll? to ſee the two Cherubins ſpreading their wings vnder a falſe God?

OH the deepe and holy wiſdome of the Almightie, which ouer-reaches all the finite conceit of his creature, who while he ſeemes moſt to neglect himſelfe, fetches about moſt glory to his owne name; He winks, and ſits ſtill on purpoſe, to ſee what men would doe, and is content to ſuffer indignitie from his creature, for a time, that he may be euerlaſtingly magnified in his iuſtice, and power: That honor

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honor pleaſeth God and men beſt, which is raiſed out of contempt.

The Arke of God was not vſed to ſuch porters; The Philiſtims carry it vnto Aſhdod, that the victory of Dagon may be more glorious: What paines ſuperſtition puts men vnto, for the triumph of a falſe cauſe? And if profane Philiſtims can thinke it no toyle to carry the Arke where they ſhould not, what a ſhame is it for vs, if we doe not gladly attend it where we ſhould? How iuſtly may Gods truth ſcorne the imparitie of our zeale?

If the Iſralites did put confidence in the Arke, can we marauell

uell that the Philiſtims did put confidence in that power which (as they thought) had conquered the Arke? The leſſe is euer ſubiect vnto the greater; What could they now thinke, but that heauen and earth were theirs? Who ſhall ſtand out againſt them, when the God of Iſrael hath yeelded? Securitie and preſumption attend euer at the threſhold of ruine.

GOD will let them ſleepe in this confidence; in the morning they ſhall finde, how vainely they haue dreamed. Now they begin to finde they haue but gloryed in their owne plague, and ouerthrowne nothing but their owne peace:

Dagon

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Dagon hath an houſe, when God hath but a Tabernacle; It is no meaſuring of religion by outward glory: Into this houſe the proud Phœnitians come, the next morning, to congratulate vnto their god, ſo great a captiue, ſuch diuine ſpoiles, and in their early deuotions to fall downe before him, vnder whom the God of Iſrael was fallen: and lo, where they finde their god, fallen downe on the ground vpon his face, before him, whom they thought both his priſoner, and theirs: Their god is forced to doe that, which they ſhould haue done voluntarily; although God caſts downe that dumbe riuall of his, for

ſcorne,

ſcorne, not for adoration. Oh yee fooliſh Philiſtims, could yee think that the ſame houſe could hold GOD & DAGON? could yee thinke a ſenſeleſſe ſtone, a fit companion and guardian, for the liuing GOD? Had yee laid your Dagon vpon his face, proſtrate before the Arke, yet would not God haue indured the indignitie of ſuch a lodging; but now, that yee preſume to ſet vp your carued ſtone, equall to his Cherubins, go read your folly in the floore of your temple, and know that hee which caſt your god ſo low, can caſt you lower.

THE true God owes a ſhame to thoſe which will be making

matches

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matches betwixt himſelfe and Belial.

But this perhaps, was onely a miſchance, or a neglect of attendance, lay to your hands, ô yee Philiſtims, and raiſe vp Dagon into his place; It is a miſerable god that needs helping vp; Had yee not beene more ſenſeleſſe then that ſtone, how could you chooſe but thinke, How ſhall hee raiſe vs aboue our enemies, that cannot riſe alone? how ſhall he eſtabliſh vs in the ſtation of our peace, that cannot hold his own foot? If Dagon did giue the foyle vnto the God of Iſrael, what power is it, that hath caſt him vpon his face, in his owne Temple?

ple? It is iuſt with God, that thoſe which want grace ſhall want wit too; it is the power of ſuperſtition, to turne men into thoſe ſtocks, and ſtones, which they worſhip: They that make them are like vnto them; Doubtleſſe, this firſt fall of Dagon was kept as ſecret, and excuſed as well as it might, and ſerued rather for aſtoniſhment, then conviction; there was more ſtrangenes then horror in that accident; that whereas Dagon had wont to ſtand, and the Philiſtims fall downe, now Dagon fell downe, and the Philiſtims ſtood, and muſt become the patrons of their owne god; their god worſhips them vpon

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his face, and craues more helpe from them, then euer he could giue: But if their ſottiſhnes can digeſt this all is well. Dagon is ſet in his place, and now thoſe hands are lift vp to him, which helped to lift him vp; and thoſe faces are proſtrate vnto him, before whom he lay proſtrate. Idolatry and ſuperſtition are not eaſily put out of countenance; But will the ielouſie of the true God put it vp thus? Shall Dagon eſcape with an harmeleſſe fall? Surely, if they had let him lye ſtill vpon the pauement, perhaps that inſenſible ſtatue had found no other reuenge; but now they will be aduancing it to the rood-loft againe, and affront Gods

Arke with it, the event will ſhame them, and let them know, how much God ſcornes a partner, either of his owne making, or theirs.

THE morning is fitteſt for deuotion, then do the Philiſtims flocke to the temple of their god; What a ſhame is it for vs to come late to ours? Although, not ſo much piety as curioſitie did now haſten their ſpeed, to ſee what reſt their Dagon was allowed to get in his owne roofe; and now behold their kinde god is come to meete them in the way; ſome peeces of him ſalute their eyes vpon the threſhold. Dagons head and hands are ouer-runne their fel-

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lowes, to tell the Philiſtims how much they were miſtaken in a god.

This ſecond fall breaks the Idoll in peeces, and threats the ſame confuſion to the worſhippers of it. Eaſie warnings neglected end euer in deſtruction. The head is for deuiſing, the hand for execution; In theſe two powers of their god, did the Philiſtims cheifly truſt; theſe are therfore laid vnder their feet, vpon the threſhold, that they might a farre of ſee their vanitie, and that (if they would) they might ſet their foote on that beſt peece of their god, whereon their heart was ſet.

There was nothing where-

in

in that Idoll reſembled a man, but in his head, and hands, the reſt was but a ſcalie portraiture of a fiſh, God would therefore ſeparate from this ſtone, that part, which had mocked man, with the counterfeit of himſelfe; that man might ſee what an vnworthy lumpe he had matched with himſelfe, and ſet vp aboue himſelfe: The iuſt quarrell of God is bent vpon thoſe meanes, and that parcell which haue dared to rob him of his glory.

How can the Philiſtims now miſſe the ſight of their owne folly? how can they bee but enough convicted of their mad idolatry, to ſee their god lye broken to morſells, vnder their

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feete? euery peece whereof proclaimes the power of him that brake it, and the ſtupiditie of thoſe that adored it? Who would expect any other iſſue of this act, but to heare the Philiſtims ſay, we now ſee how ſuperſtition hath blinded vs? Dagon is no god for vs, our hearts ſhall neuer more reſt vpon a broken ſtatue: That onely true God, which hath beaten ours, ſhall challenge vs by the right of conqueſt: But here was none of this; rather a further degree of their dotage followes vpon this palpable conviction: They cannot yet ſuſpect that god, whoſe head they may trample vpon, but in ſteed of hating their Dagon,

Dagon, that lay broken vpon their threſhold, they honor the threſhold, on which Dagon lay; and dare not ſet their foote on that place, which was hallowed by the broken head, and hands of their Deity: Oh the obſtinacie of Idolatry, which where it hath got hold of the heart, knowes neither to bluſh, nor yeeld, but rather gathers ſtrength from that which might iuſtly confound it. The hand of the Almighty, which moued them not in falling vpon their god, falls now neerer them vpon their perſons, and ſtrikes them in their bodies, which would not feele themſelues ſtricken in their Idoll: Paine ſhall humble

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them, whom ſhame cannot. Thoſe which had entertained the ſecret thoughts of abhominable Idolatry within them, are now plagued in the inwardeſt and moſt ſecret part of their bodies, with a loathſome diſeaſe; and now grow weary of themſelues, in ſtead of their idolatry. I doe not heare them acknowledge it was Gods hand, which had ſtricken Dagon their god, till now, they finde themſelues ſtricken: Gods iudgements are the racke of godleſſe men; If one ſtraine make them not confeſſe, let them be ſtretched but one wrench hyer, and they cannot be ſilent. The iuſt auenger of ſinne will not looſe the glory of

of his executions, but will haue men know from whom they ſmart.

THE emerods were not a diſeaſe beyond the compaſſe of naturall cauſes, neither was it hard for the wiſer ſort, to giue a reaſon of their complaint, yet they aſcribe it to the hand of God: The knowledge and operation of ſecondary cauſes ſhould be no preiudice to the firſt; They are worſe then the Philiſtims, who when they ſee the meanes, doe not acknowledge the firſt mouer; whoſe actiue and iuſt power is no leſſe ſeene in imploying ordinarie agents, then in raiſing vp extraordinary; neither doth hee leſſe ſmite by a common

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common fever, then a reuenging Angell.

They iudge right of the cauſe, what doe they reſolue for the cure? (Let not the Arke of the God of Iſrael abide with vs) where they ſhould haue ſaid, let vs caſt out Dagon, that we may pacifie and retaine the God of Iſrael, they determine to thruſt out the Arke of God, that they might peaceably inioy themſelues, and Dagon: Wicked men are vpon all occaſions glad to be rid of God, but they can with no patience, indure to part with their ſins, and whiles they are weary of the hand that puniſhes them, they hold faſt the cauſe of their puniſhment.

Their

THEIR first and onely care is to put away him, who as hee hath corrected, ſo can eaſe them. Folly is neuer ſeparated from wickednes.

THEIR heart told them that they had no right to the Arke. A counſell is called of their Princes, and Prieſts: If they had reſolued to ſend it home, they had done wiſely; Now they doe not carry it away, but they carry it about from Ebenezer to Aſhdod, from Aſhdod to Gath, from Gath to Ekron: Their ſtomacke was greater then their conſcience; The Arke was too ſore for them, yet it was too good for Iſrael; and they will rather dye, then make Iſrael happy.

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happy. Their conceit that the change of ayre could appeaſe the Arke, God vſeth to his own aduantage; for by this meanes his power is knowne, and his iudgements ſpred ouer all the country of the Philiſtims: What doe theſe men now, but ſend the plague of God to their fellowes? The iuſtice of God can make the ſinnes of men their mutuall executioners; It is the faſhion of wicked men to draw their neighbours into the partnerſhip of their condemnation.

Whereſoeuer the Arke goes, there is deſtruction; the beſt of Gods ordinances, if they be not proper to vs, are deadly. The Iſraelites did not more ſhout for ioy,

ioy, when they ſaw the Arke come to them, then the Ekronites cry out for greeſe, to ſee it brought amongſt them: Spiritual things are either ſoueraigne, or hurtfull, according to the diſpoſition of the receiuers. The Arke doth either ſaue, or kill; as it is entertained.

AT laſt, when the Philiſtims are well weary of paine & death, they are glad to be quit of their ſinne; The voice of the Princes and people is changed to the better, (Send away the Arke of the God of Iſrael, and let it returne to his owne place,) God knowes how to bring the ſtubbornneſt enemie vpon his knees, and makes him doe that out

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out of feare, which his beſt childe would doe out of loue and dutie: How miſerable was the eſtate of theſe Philiſtims? Euery man was either dead, or ſicke: thoſe that were left liuing (through their extremitie of paine) enuied the dead, and the the cry of their whole Cities went vp to heauen. It is happy that God hath ſuch ſtore of plagues and thunderbolts for the wicked: If he had not a fire of iudgment, wherewith the yron-hearts of men might be made flexible, he would want obedience, and the world peace.

THE

THE ARKES Reuenge and Returne.

IT had wont to be a ſure rule, whereſoeuer God is among men, there is the Church: Here onely it failed: The teſtimonie of Gods preſence was many moneths amongſt the Philiſtims, for a puniſhment to his owne people, whom he left; for a curſe to thoſe forrainers, which entertained it; Iſrael was

was ſeuen moneths without God: How do we thinke faithfull *Samuel* tooke this abſence? How deſolate, and forlorne did the tabernacle of God looke, without the Arke? There were ſtill the Altars of God, his Preiſts, Leuites, tables, vailes, cenſers, with all the legall accouſtrements: Theſe without the Arke, were as the Sunne without light, in the midſt of an eclipſe: If all theſe had bin taken away, and onely the Arke had bin remayning, the loſſe had bin nothing to this, that the Arke ſhould be gone, and they left: For what are all theſe without God, and how all-ſufficient is God without theſe? There are times

times, wherein God withdrawes himſelfe from his Church, and ſeems to leaue her without comfort, without protection: Sometimes we ſhall finde Iſrael taken from the Arke, other-whiles the Arke is taken from Iſrael: In either, there is a ſeparation betwixt the Arke and Iſrael: Heauy times to euery true Iſraelite, yet ſuch, as whoſe example may releeue vs in our deſertions: Still was this people Iſrael; the ſeed of him, that would not be left of God without a bleſſing; and therefore without the teſtimony of his preſence, was God preſent with them: It were wide with the faithfull, if God were not often-times with them, when

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there is no witneſſe of his preſence.

One act was a mutuall penance to the Iſraelites and Philiſtims, I know not to whether more: Iſrael greeued for the loſſe of that, whoſe preſence greeued the Philiſtims, their paine was therefore no other then voluntary: It is ſtrange, that the Philiſtims would endure ſeauen monthes ſmart with the Arke, ſince they ſaw, that the preſence of that priſoner would not requite, no nor mitigate to them, one houres miſery: Fooliſh men will be ſtrugling with God, till they be vtterly either breathleſſe, or impotent. Their hope was, that time might abate diſpleaſure,

ſure, euen whiles they perſiſted to offend: The falſe hopes of worldly men coſt them deare, they could not be ſo miſerable, if their owne hearts did not deceiue them with miſ-expectations of impoſſible fauour.

IN matters, that concerne a God, who is ſo fit to be conſulted with, as the Preiſts? The Princes of the Philiſtims had before giuen their voices, yet nothing is determined, nothing is done without the direction, and aſſent of thoſe, whom they accounted ſacred: Nature it ſelfe ſends vs in diuine things, to thoſe perſons, whoſe calling is diuine: It is either diſtruſt, or preſumption, or contempt, that

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carries vs our owne waies in ſpirituall matters, without aduiſing with them, whoſe lips God hath appointed to preſerue knowledge: There cannot but ariſe many difficulties in vs about the Arke of God, whom ſhould wee conſult with but thoſe, which haue the tongue of the learned?

Doubtles, this queſtion of the Arke did abide much debating: There wanted not faire probabilities on both ſides: A wiſe Philiſtim might well plead, If God had either ſo great care of the Arke, or power to retaine it, how is it become ours? A wiſer then he would reply; If the God of Iſrael had wanted either

ther care or power, Dagon, and we had beene ſtill whole; why doe we thus grone, and dye, all that are but within the ayre of of the Arke, if a diuine hand do not attend it? Their ſmart pleads enough for the diſmiſſion of the Arke: The next demand of their Preiſts and Soothſayers, is, how it ſhould be ſent home: Affliction had made them ſo wiſe, as to know, that euery faſhion of parting with the Arke would not ſatisfie the owner: oftentimes the circumſtance of an action marres the ſubſtance: In diuine matters we muſt not onely looke, that the body of our ſeruice be ſound, but that the clothes be fit: Nothing hinders,

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but that ſometimes good aduiſe may fall from the mouth of wicked men. Theſe ſuperſtitious Preiſts can counſell them not to ſend away the Arke of God empty, but to giue it a ſin-offering: They had not liued ſo farre from the ſmoake of the Iewiſh Altars, but that they knew, God was accuſtomed to manifold oblations, and cheifly to thoſe of expiation. No Iſraelite could haue ſaid better: Superſtition is the ape of true deuotion, and if we looke not to the ground of both, many times it is hard by the very outward acts to diſtinguiſh them: Nature it ſelfe teacheth vs, that God loues a full hand: Hee that hath beene ſo boun-

bountifull to vs, as to giue vs all, lookes for a returne of ſome offering from vs; If wee preſent him with nothing but our ſins, how can wee looke to be accepted? The ſacrifices vnder the goſpell are ſpirituall, with theſe muſt we come into the preſence of God, if wee deſire to carry away remiſſion and fauour.

THE Philiſtims knew well, that it were bootleſſe for them to offer, what they liſted, their next ſuite is to be directed in the matter of their oblation: Pagans can teach vs, how vnſafe it is to walke in the waies of religion, without a guide, yet here, their beſt teachers can but gueſſe at their dutie, and muſt deuiſe for

the people, that, which the people durſt not impoſe vpon themſelues: The golden Emerods and Miſe were but coniecturall preſcripts: With what ſecuritie may wee conſult with them, which haue their directions frō the mouth and hand of the Allmighty?

God ſtroke the Philiſtims at once in their god, in their bodies, in their land: In their god, by his ruine, and diſmembring: nI their bodies by the Emerods: In their land, by the Miſe: That baſe vermine did God ſend among them on purpoſe to ſhame their Dagon, and them, that they might ſee, how vnable their god was (which they thought

thought the Victor of the Arke) to ſubdue the leaſt Mouſe, which the true God did create, and command to plague them: This plague vpon their fields, began together with that vpon their bodies, it was not mentioned, not complained of, till they thinke of diſmiſſing the Arke: Greater croſſes doe commonly ſwallow vp the leſſe: At leaſt, leſſer euills are either ſilent or vnheard, while the eare is filled with the clamour of greater. Their very Princes were puniſhed with the miſe, as well as the emerods; God knowes no perſons in the execution of iudgements, the leaſt and meaneſt of all Gods creatures is ſufficient to

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to be the reuenger of his Creator.

God sent them mise, and emerods of flesh, and blood: they returne him both these of gold, to imply, both, that these iudgements came out from God, and that they did gladly giue him the glory of that, whereof hee gaue them paine and sorrow, and that they would willingly buy off their paine, with the best of their substance: The proportion betwixt the complaint and satisfaction is more precious to him, then the metall. There was a publike confession in this resemblance, which is so pleasing vnto God, that he rewards it, euen in wicked men, with a relaxa-

relaxation of outward puniſh-
ment. The number was no leſſe
ſignificant, then the forme: Fiue
golden emerods, and miſe for
the fiue Princes, and diuiſions
of Philiſtims: As God made no
difference in puniſhing, ſo they
make none in their oblation;
The people are compriſed in
them, in whom they are vnited,
their ſeuerall Princes: They
were one with their Prince, their
offering is one with his; as they
were ring-leaders in the ſinne, ſo
muſt they be in the ſatiſfaction:
In a multitude, it is euer ſeene, as
in a beaſt, that the body followes
the head. Of all others great
men had neede to looke to their
waies, it is in them, as in figures,
one

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one ſtands for a thouſand: One offering ſerues not all, there muſt be fiue, according to the fiue heads of the offence. Generalities will not content God; euery man muſt make his ſeuerall peace, if not in himſelfe, yet in his head: Nature taught them a ſhadow of that, the ſubſtance and perfection wherof is taught vs by the grace of the Goſpell; Euery ſoule muſt ſatiſfie God, if not in it ſelfe, yet in him, in whom we are both one, and abſolute: we are the body, whereof Chriſt is the head, our ſinne is in our ſelues, our ſatisfaction muſt be in him.

Samvel himſelfe could not haue ſpoken more diuinely, then theſe

theſe Preiſts of Dagon; they doe not onely talke of giuing glory to the God of Iſrael, but fall into an holy and graue expoſtulation (wherefore then ſhould yee harden your hearts, as the Ægyptians, and Pharaoh hardned their hearts, when hee wrought wonderfully among them? &c.) They confeſſe a ſupereminent, & reuenging hand of God ouer their gods, they parallell their plagues with the Ægyptian, they make vſe of Pharaohs ſinne, and iudgment; What could be better ſaid? All religions haue afforded them, that could ſpeake well: Theſe good words left them ſtill both Philiſtims, and ſuperſtitious:

How

How ſhould men be hypocrites, if they had not good tongues? yet (as wickedneſſe can hardly hide it ſelfe) theſe holy ſpeeches are not without a tincture of that Idolatry, wherewith the heart was infected: For they profeſſe care not only of the perſons, and lands of the Philiſtims, but of their gods; (that he may take his hand from you, and from your gods.) Who would thinke, that wiſdome and folly could lodge ſo neere together? that the ſame men ſhould haue care both of the glory of the true God, and the preſeruation of the falſe? that they ſhould bee ſo vaine, as to take thought for thoſe gods, which they granted

to

to be obnoxious vnto an hyer Deity? Oft-times euen one word bewrayeth a whole packe of falſhood, and though ſuperſtition be a cleanly counterfet, yet ſome one ſlip of the tongue diſcouers it, as we ſay of Deuils, which though they put on faire formes, yet are they knowne by their clouen feete.

WHAT other warrant theſe ſuperſtitious Preiſts had for the maine ſubſtance of their aduiſe, I know not, ſure I am, the probabilitie of the euent was faire; that two kine neuer vſed to any yoke, ſhould runne from their calues (which were newly ſhut vp from them) to draw the Arke home in a contrary way, muſt needs

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needs argue an hand aboue nature; What elſe ſhould ouer-rule brute creatures to prefer a forced cariage vnto a naturall burden? What ſhould carry them from their owne home, towards the home of the Arke? What elſe ſhould guide an vntamed and vntaught teame, in as right a path toward Iſrael, as their teachers could haue gone? What elſe could make very beaſts more wiſe, then their maſters? There is a ſpeciall prouidence of God in the very motions of brute creatures; Neither Philiſtims nor Iſraelites ſaw ought that droue them, yet they ſaw them ſo runne, as thoſe that were led by a diuine conduct. The reaſon-

reaſon-leſſe creatures alſo do the the will of their Maker; euery act that is done either by them, or to them, makes vp the decree of the Almighty; and if in extraordinary actions and euents his hand is more viſible, yet it is no leſſe certainly preſent in the common.

LITLE did the Iſraelites of Bethſhemeſh looke for ſuch a ſight, whiles they were reaping their wheat in the valley, as to ſee the Arke of God come running to them, without a conuoy; neither can it be ſaid, whether they were more affected with ioy, or with aſtoniſhment, with ioy at the preſence of the Arke, with aſtoniſhment at the

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miracle of the tranſportation: Downe went their ſickles, and now euery man runnes to reape the comfort of this better harueſt, to meete that bread of Angels, to ſalute thoſe Cherubims, to welcome that God, whoſe abſence had bin their death: But, as it is hard not to ouer-ioy in a ſudden proſperitie, and, to vſe happineſſe is no leſſe difficult, then to forbeare it; Theſe glad Iſraelites cannot ſee, but they muſt gaze; they cannot gaze on the glorious outſide, but they muſt be (whether out of rude iollity, or curioſitie, or ſuſpition of the purloyning ſome of thoſe ſacred implements) prying into the ſecrets of Gods Arke: Nature

ture is too ſubiect to extremities, and is euer either too dull in want, or wanton in fruition: It is no eaſie matter to keepe a meane, whether in good, or euill.

BETHSHEMESH was a Citie of Preiſts, they ſhould haue knowne better, how to demeane themſelues towards the Arke; this priuiledge doubled their offence: There was no malice in this curious inquiſition, the ſame eyes that lookt into the Arke, lookt alſo vp to heauen in their offerings, and the ſame hands, that touched it, offered ſacrifice to the God that brought it. Who could expect any thing now but acceptation? who

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would ſuſpect any danger? It is not a following act of deuotion, that can make amends for a former ſinne: There was a death owing them, immediately vpon their offence, God will take his owne time for the execution; In the meane while, they may ſacrifice, but they cannot ſatisfie, they cannot eſcape. The kine are ſacrificed, the cart burnes them that drew it: Here was an offering of praiſe, when they had more neede of a treſpaſſe-offering; many an heart is lifted vp in a conceit of ioy, when it hath iuſt cauſe of humiliation: God lets them alone with their ſacrifice, but when that is done, he comes ouer them with

with a backe reckning for their ſinne: Fifty thouſand & ſeuenty Iſraelites are ſtroke dead for this vnreuerence to the Arke: A wofull welcome for the Arke of God into the borders of Iſrael; It killd them for looking into it, who thought it their life to ſee it; It dealt blowes, and death on both hands; to Philiſtims, to Iſraelites; to both of them for prophaning it: The one with their Idoll, the other with their eyes. It is a fearefull thing to vſe the holy ordinances of God with an vnreuerent boldneſſe. Feare and trembling becomes vs in our acceſſe to the Maieſtie of the Allmighty: Neither was there more ſtate, then ſecrecy in

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Gods Arke; ſome things the wiſdome of God deſires to conceale: The vnreuerence of the Iſraelites was no more faulty, then their curioſitie; ſecret things to God, things reuealed to vs, and to our children.

xi

THE

THE REMOVE of the Arke.

HEARE of the Bethſhemites lamentation, I hear not of their repentanc, they cõplaine of their ſmart, they complaine not of their ſinne, and for ought I can perceiue, ſpeake, as if God were curious, rather then they faulty: (*Who is able to ſtand before this holy Lord God, and to whom ſhall he goe from vs?*) as if

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none could pleaſe that God, which miſliked them: It is the faſhion of naturall men to iuſtifie themſelues in their own courſes; If they cannot charge any earthly thing with the blame of their ſuffering, they will caſt it vpon heauen: That a man pleads himſelfe guilty of his owne wrong, is no common worke of Gods ſpirit. Bethſhemeſh bordred too neere vpon the Philiſtims; If theſe men thought the very preſence of the Arke hurtfull, why do they ſend to their neighbours of Kiriathiearim, that they might make themſelues miſerable? Where there is a miſconceit of God, it is no maruell, if there be a defect of

of charity: How cunningly do they ſend their meſſage to their neighbours? They doe not ſay, the Arke of God is come to vs of it owne accord, leſt the men of Kiriath-iearim ſhould reply, It is come to you, let it ſtay with you; They ſay onely, the Philiſtims haue brought it; they tell of the preſence of the Arke, they doe not tell of the ſucceſſe, leſt the example of their iudgement ſhould haue diſcouraged the forwardnes of their releefe; and after all, the offer was plauſible; *Come yee downe and take it vp to you,* as if the honor had bin too great for themſelus; as if their modeſtie had beene ſuch, that they would not foreſtall and engroſſe happines

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happineſſe from the reſt of Iſrael.

It is no boote to teach nature, how to tell her owne tale; ſmart and danger will make a man witty: He is rarely conſtant, that will not diſſemble for eaſe. It is good to be ſuſpicious of the euaſions of thoſe, which would put off miſerie: Thoſe of Bethſhemeſh were not more crafty, then theſe of Kiriathiearim (which was the ground of their boldnes) faithfull: So many thouſand Bethſhemites could not be dead, and no part of the rumor flie to them; they heard, how thicke, not onely the Philiſtims, but the bordring Iſraelites fell downe dead before the

the Arke; yet they durſt aduenture to come, and fetch it, euen from amongſt the carkaſſes of their brethren: They had bin formerly acquainted with the Arke, they knew it was holy, it could not be changeable, and therefore they well conceiued this ſlaughter to ariſe from the vnholineſſe of men, not from the rigour of God; and therevpon can ſeeke comfort in that, which others found deadly: Gods children cannot by any meanes bee diſcouraged from their honor, and loue to his ordinances: If they ſee thouſands ſtrucke downe to Hell by the ſcepter of Gods kingdome, yet they will kiſſe it vpon their knees,

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knees, and if their Sauiour be a rocke of offence, and the occaſion of the fall of millions in Iſrael, they can loue him no leſſe: They can warme them at the fire, wherewith they ſee others burned; they can feede temperately of that, whereof others haue ſurfeted to death &c.

BETHSHEMESH was a Citie of Preiſts, and Leuites: Kiriathiearim a Citie of Iuda, where we heare but of one Leuite, Abinadab; yet this Citie was more zealous for God, more reuerent, and conſcionable in the entertainment of the Arke, then the other. We heard of the taking downe of the Arke by the Bethſhemites, when it came miraculouſly

louſly to them, we do not heare of any man ſanctified for the attendance of it, as was done in this ſecond lodging of the Arke: Grace is not tyed either to number, or meanes. It is in ſpirituall matters, as in the eſtate: Small helps with good thrift enrich vs, when great patrimonies looſe themſelues in the neglect. Shiloh was wont to be the place, which was honored with the preſence of the Arke; Euer ſince the wickednes of Elies ſonnes, that was forlorne, and deſolate, and now Kiriath-iearim ſucceeds into this priuiledge: It did not ſtand with the royall liberty of God, no not vnder the law, to tye himſelfe vnto places and

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and perſons: Vnworthines was euer a ſufficient cauſe of exchange. It was not yet his time to ſtirre from the Iewes, yet hee remoued from one Prouince to another: Leſſe reaſon haue we to thinke, that ſo God will reſide amongſt vs, that none of our prouocations can driue him from vs &c.

Israel, which had found the miſery of Gods abſence, is now reſolued into teares of contrition, and thankfulnes, vpon his returne: There is no mention of their lamenting after the Lord, while he was gone, but when he was returned, and ſetled in Kiriath-iearim; The mercies of God draw more teares from

from his children, then his iudgments doe from his enemies: There is no better ſigne of good nature, or grace, then to be won to repentance with kindneſſe: Not to thinke of God, except we be beaten vnto it, is ſeruile: Becauſe God was come againe to Iſrael, therefore Iſrael is returned to God; If God had not come firſt, they had neuer come: If he, that came to them, had not made them come to him, they had bin euer parted. They were cloyed with God, while he was perpetually reſident with them, now that his abſence had made him dainty, they cleaue to him feruently, and penitently in his returne: This was it, that God meant

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meant in his departure, a better welcome at his comming backe.

I heard no newes of Samuel all this while, the Arke was gone: Now when the Arke is returned, and placed in Kiriath-iearim, I heare him treat with the people. It is not like, he was silent in this sad desertion of God; but now he takes full aduantage of the professed contrition of Israel, to deale with them effectually, for their perfect conversion vnto God, It is great wisdome in spirituall matters, to take occasion by the fore-locke, and to strike whiles the yron is hot: We may beat long enough at the dore, but till God haue opened,

opened, it is no going in; and when he hath opened, it is no delaying to enter: The tryall of ſincerity is the abandoning of our wonted ſinnes: This Samuel vrgeth (*If yee be come againe vnto the Lord with all your heart, put away the ſtrange gods from among you, and Aſhtaroth*): In vaine had it beene to profeſſe repentance, whilſt they continued in Idolatry; God will neuer acknowledge any conuert, that ſtayes in a knowne ſinne: Graces and vertues are ſo linckt together, that he, which hath one, hath all: The partiall conuerſion of men vnto God is but hatefull hypocriſie. How happily effectuall is a word ſpoken in ſeaſon?

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Samuels exhortation wrought vpon the hearts of Iſrael, and fetcht water out of their eyes, ſuites, and confeſſions, & vowes out of their lips, and their falſe gods out of their hands; yet it was not meerely remorſe, but feare alſo, that moued Iſrael to this humble ſubmiſſion.

The Philiſtims ſtood ouer them ſtill, and threatned them with new aſſaults, the memory of their late ſlaughter, & ſpoile, was yet freſh in their mindes, ſorrow for the euils paſt, and feare of the future fetcht them downe vpon their knees: It is not more neceſſarie for men to be cheered with hopes, then to be awed with dangers; where God

God intends the humiliation of his ſeruants, there ſhall not want means of their deiection: It was happy for Iſrael that they had an enemie. Is it poſſible, that the Philiſtims after thoſe deadly plagues, which they ſuſteined from the God of Iſrael, ſhould thinke of inuading Iſrael? Thoſe, that were ſo mated with the preſence of the Arke, that they neuer thought themſelues ſafe, till it was out of ſight, doe they now dare to thruſt themſelues vpon the new reuenge of the Arke? It ſlew them, whiles they thought to honor it, and do they thinke to eſcape, whileſt they reſiſt it? It ſlew them in their owne coaſts, and do they

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come to it to ſeeke death? yet behold no ſooner do the Philiſtims heare, that the Iſraelites are gathered to Mizpeh, but the Princes of the Philiſtims gather themſelues againſt them: No warnings will ſerue obdurate hearts, wicked men are euen ambitious of deſtruction; Iudgements neede not to goe finde them out, they runne to meete their bane.

The Philiſtims come vp, and the Iſraelites feare; they that had not the wit to feare, whilſt they were not frends with God, haue not now the grace of feareleſnes, when they were reconciled to God: Boldnes and feare are commonly miſplaced in the beſt hearts,

hearts; when we ſhould tremble, we are confident, and when we ſhould be aſſured, we tremble: Why ſhould Iſrael haue feared, ſince they had made their peace with the God of hoſtes? Nothing ſhould affright thoſe, which are vpright with God. The peace, which Iſrael had made with God, was true, but tender; They durſt not truſt their owne innocencie ſo much, as the prayers of Samuel; *Ceaſe not to cry to the Lord our God for vs.* In temporall things nothing hinders, but we may fare better for other mens faith, then for our owne. It is no ſmall happineſſe to be intereſſed in them, which are fauorites in the court

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of heauen; one faithfull man in those occasions is more worth then millions of the wauering and vncertaine.

A good heart is easily wonne to deuotion: Samuel cries, and sacrificeth to God; he had done so, though they had intreated his silence, yea his forbearance: Whiles he is offering, the Philistims fight with Israel, and God fights with the Philistims (*The Lord thundred with a great thunder that day vpon the Philistims, and scattered them*): Samuel fought more vpon his knees, then all Israel besides: The voice of God answered the voice of Samuel, and speakes confusion and death to the Philistims: How were the proud

proud Philiſtims dead with feare, ere they died, to heare the fearefull thunder-claps of an angry God againſt them? to ſee, that heauen it ſelf fought againſt them? Hee that ſlew them ſecretly in the reuenges of his Arke, now kills them with open horror in the fields: If preſumption did not make wicked men madd, they would neuer lift their hand againſt the Allmighty; what are they in his hands, when he is diſpoſed to vengance.

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THE MEETING of Saul and Samuel.

SAMVEL began his acquaintance with God early, and continued it long: He began it in his long coates, and continued to his gray haires: (He iudged Israel all the daies of his life.) God doth not vse to cast off his old seruants; their age indeereth them to him the more; If we be not vnfaithfull to him, he can not be vnconstant to vs: At

At laſt his decayed age met with ill partners, His ſonnes for deputies, and Saul for a King; The wickednes of his ſonnes gaue the occaſion of a change: Perhaps Iſrael had neuer thought of a King, if Samuels ſonnes had not beene vnlike their father; Who can promiſe himſelfe holy children, when the loynes of a Samuel, and the education in the Temple, yeelded monſters? It is not likely; that good Samuel was faulty in that indulgence, for which his owne mouth had denounced Gods iudgement againſt Hely: yet this holy man ſucceeds Hely in his croſſe, as well as his place, though not in his ſinne, and is afflicted with a wicked

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wicked succession: God will let vs finde, that grace is by gift, not by inheritance.

I feare Samuel was too partiall to nature in the surrogation of his sonnes, I do not heare of Gods allowance to this act: If this had beene Gods choice, as well as his, it had beene like to haue receiued more blessing. Now all Israel had cause to rue, that these were the sonnes of Samuel; For now the question was not of their vertues, but of their blood, not of their worthinesse, but their birth; euen the best heart may be blinded with affection. Who can maruell at these errors of parents loue, when he that so holily iudged

Israel

Israel all his life, misiudged of his owne sonnes?

IT was Gods ancient purpose to raise vp a King to his people: How doth he take occasion to performe it, but by the vnruly desires of Israel? euen as we say of humane proceedings, that ill manners beget good lawes. That Monarchy is the best forme of gouernment, there is no question: Good things may be ill desired, so was this of Israel; If an itching desire of alteration had not possessed them, why did they not rather sue for a reformation of their gouernors, then for a change of gouernment? Were Samuels sonnes so desperately euill, that there was no

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possibilitie of amendment? Or if they were past hope, were there not some others to haue succeeded the iustice of Samuel, no lesse then these did his person? What needed Samuel to be thrust out of place? What needed the ancient forme of administration to be altred? He that raised vp their Iudges, would haue found time to raise them vp Kings: Their curious, and inconstant new-fanglenes, will not abide to stay it, but with an heady importunitie labours to ouer-hasten the pace of God. Where there is a setled course of good gouernment (howsoeuer blemished with some weaknesses) it is not safe to

be

be ouer-forward to a change, though it ſhould be to the better. He, by whom Kings raigne, ſaies, they haue caſt him away, that he ſhould not raigne ouer them, becauſe they deſire a King to raigne ouer them: Iudges were his own inſtitutiõ to his people, as yet Kings were not; after that Kings were ſetled, to deſire the gouernment of Iudges, had bin a much more ſeditious inconſtancy: God hath not appointed to euery time & place thoſe formes, which are ſimply beſt in themſelues, but thoſe, which are beſt to them, vnto whom they are appointed; which we may neither alter, till he begin, nor recall, when he hath altred.

THIS

This busines seemed personally to concerne Samuel, yet he so deales in it, not as a party, not as a iudge of his owne case, but as a Prophet of God, as a freind of his opposite; He prayes to God for aduise, He fore-tells the state and courses of their future King: Wilfull men are blinde to all dangers, are deafe to all good counsells. Israel must haue a King, though they pay neuer so deare for their longing: The vaine affectation of conformitie to other Nations ouercomes all discouragements; there is no readier way to error, then to make others examples the rule of our desires, or actions: If euery man haue not grounds of his

his owne, whereon to ſtand, there can be no ſtabilitie in his reſolutions, or proceedings.

SINCE then they chooſe to haue a King, God will chooſe the King, which they ſhall haue. The kingdome ſhall begin in Beniamin, which was to indure in Iuda: It was no probabilitie, or reaſon, this firſt King ſhould proue well, becauſe he was abortiue; their humor of innovation deſerued to bee puniſhed with their owne choiſe: Kiſh the father of Saul was mighty in eſtate; Saul was mighty in perſon, ouer-looking the reſt of the people in ſtature, no leſſe then he ſhould do in dignitie: The ſenſes of the Iſraelites could not but

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but be well pleaſed for the time, howſoeuer their hearts were afterwards; when men are carried with outward ſhews, it is a ſigne, that God means them a deluſion.

How far God fetches his purpoſes about? The aſſes of Kiſh Sauls father, are ſtrayed away: What is that to the newes of a kingdom? God layes theſe ſmall accidents for the ground of greater deſignes: The aſſes muſt be loſt, none but Saul muſt goe with his fathers ſeruant to ſeeke them: Samuel ſhall meet them in the ſearch: Saul ſhall be premoniſhed of his inſuing royalty; Litle can we, by the beginning of any action, gueſſe at Gods intention in the concluſion.

Obe-

OBEDIENCE was a fit entrance into ſoueraingty: The ſeruice was homely for the ſon of a great man, yet he refuſeth not to goe, as a fellow to his fathers ſeruant, vpon ſo meane a ſearch: The diſobedient and ſcornefull are good for nothing, they are neither fit to be ſubiects nor gouernors: Kiſh was a great man in his country, yet he diſdaineth not to ſend his ſon Saul vpon a thrifty errand, neither doth Saul plead his diſparagement from a refuſall. Pride and wantonneſſe haue marred our times: Great parents count it a diſreputation to imploy their ſonnes in courſes of frugalitie; & their pampred children think

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it a ſhame to do any thing; and ſo beare themſelues as thoſe, that hold it the onely glory to be either idle or wicked.

Neither doth Saul goe faſhionably to worke, but does this ſeruice hartily & painfully, as a man, that deſires rather to effect the command, then pleaſe the commander: Hee paſſed from Ephraim to the land of Shaliſha, from Shaliſha to Salim, from Salim to Iemini, whence his houſe came; from Iemini to Zuph, not ſo much as ſtaying with any of his kinred, ſo long as to vittaile himſelfe: He that was afterward an ill King, approued himſelfe a good ſonne. As there are diuerſitie of relations,

ons, and offices; ſo there is of diſpoſitions; thoſe, which are excellent in ſome, attaine not to a mediocritie in other: It is no arguing from priuate vertues to publique; from dexteritie in one ſtation, to the reſt: A ſeuerall grace belongs to the particular cariage of euery place, whereto weare called, which if we want, the place may well want vs.

THERE was more praiſe of his obedience in ceaſing to ſeek, then in ſeeking; he takes care, leſt his father ſhould take care for him, that whilſt hee ſhould ſeeme officious in the leſſe, he might not neglect the greateſt. A blinde obedience in ſome caſes doth well, but it doth farre

better, when it is led with the eyes of diſcretion; otherwiſe we may more offend in pleaſing, then in diſobeying.

Great is the benefit of a wiſe and religious attendant, ſuch a one puts vs into thoſe duties and actions, which are moſt expedient, and leaſt thought of. If Saul had not had a diſcreet ſeruant, he had returned but as wiſe as hee came; now hee is drawne in, to conſult with the man of God, and heares more, then he hoped for. Saul was now a ſufficient iourney from his fathers houſe, yet his religious ſeruant in this remoteneſſe, takes knowledge of the place, where the Prophet dwells, and how

how honorably doth hee mention him to his Maſter? *Behold, in this Citie is a man of God, and he is an honorable man, all that he ſaith commeth to paſſe*: Gods prophets are publique perſons, as their function, ſo their notice concernes euery man: There is no reaſon God ſhould abate any of the reſpect due to his Miniſters vnder the Goſpell: S^t Pauls ſuite is both vniuerſall and euerlaſting; *I beſeech you, brethren, know them that labour amongſt you.*

THE cheife praiſe is to be able to giue good aduiſe; the next is to take it. Saul is eaſily induced to condiſcend; He, whoſe curioſitie led him voluntarily at laſt, to the witch of Endor, is

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now led at firſt by good counſell to the man of God; neither is his care in going, leſſe commendable, then his will to goe. For as a man, that had bin catechiſed not to go vnto God empty-handed, he askes, *What ſhall we bring vnto the man? What haue we?* The caſe is well altred in our times: Euery man thinks, what may I keep backe? There is no gaine ſo ſweet, as of a robbed altar; yet Gods charge is no leſſe vnder the Goſpell, *Let him that is taught, make his teacher partaker of all.* As this faithfull care of Saul was a iuſt preſage of ſucceſſe, more then he looked for, or could expect; ſo the ſacrilegious vnthankfulnes of many, bodes

bodes that ruine to their ſoule and eſtate, which they could not haue grace to feare.

HE that knew the Prophets abode, knew alſo the honor of his place, hee could not but know, that Samuel was a mixt perſon: The Iudge of Iſrael, and the Seer; yet both Saul and his ſeruant purpoſe to preſent him with the fourth part of a ſhekell, to the value of about our fiue pence: They had learned, that thankfulnes was not to be meaſured, of good men, by the weight, but by the will of the retributor: How much more will God accept the ſmall offerings of his weake ſeruants,

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when hee ſees them proceede from great loue?

The very maides of the City can giue direction to the Prophet, they had liſtned after the holy affaires, they had heard of the ſacrifice, and could tell of the neceſſitie of Samuels preſence: Thoſe that liue within the ſun ſhine of religion, cannot but be ſomewhat coloured with thoſe beames: Where there is practiſe and example of piety in the better ſort, there will be a reflexion of it vpon the meaneſt: It is no ſmall benefit to liue in religious and holy places, wee ſhall be much to blame, if all goodnes fall beſide vs: Yea ſo skilfull were theſe damzels in the faſhi-

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ons of their publike ſacrifices, that they could inſtruct Saul and his ſeruant, vnasked, how the people would not eat, till Samuel came to bleſſe the ſacrifice. This meeting was not more a ſacrifice, then a feaſt: Theſe two agree well, we haue neuer ſo much cauſe to reioyce in feaſting, as when wee haue duely ſerued our God: The ſacrifice was a feaſt to God, the other to men: The body may eat and drinke with contentment, when the ſoule hath bin firſt fed, and hath firſt feaſted the maker of both: Goe eat thy bread with ioy, and drinke thy drinke with a merry heart, for God now accepteth thy works.

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The ſacrifice was before conſecrated, when it was offered to God, but it was not conſecrated to them, till Samuel bleſſed it, his bleſſing made that meat holy to the gueſts, which was formerly hallowed to God: All creatures were made good, & tooke holineſſe from him, which gaue them their being; Our ſinne brought that curſe vpon them (which vnleſſe our prayers remoue it) cleaues to them ſtill, ſo as we receiue them not without a curſe: We are not our owne freinds, except our prayers helpe to take that away, which our ſin hath brought, that ſo to the cleane all may be cleane: It is an vnmannerly godleſſnes to take

take Gods creatures without the leaue of their maker, and well may God with-hold his bleſſing from them, which haue not the grace to aske it.

THOSE gueſts, which were ſo religious, that they would not eat their ſacrifice vnbleſſed, might haue bleſſed it themſelues: Euery man might pray, though euery man might not ſacrifice; yet would they not either eat, or bleſſe, whiles they looked for the preſence of a Prophet. Euery Chriſtian may ſanctifie his owne meat, but where thoſe are preſent, that are peculiarly ſanctified to God, this ſeruice is fitteſt for them: It is commendable to teach children the

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the practiſe of thankſgiuing, but the beſt is euer moſt meete to bleſſe our tables, and thoſe eſpecially, whoſe office it is to offer our prayers to God.

Litle did Saul thinke, that his comming, and his errand was ſo noted of God, as that it was fore-ſignified vnto the Prophet, and now, behold Samuel is told a day before of the man, the time, the place of his meeting. The eye of Gods prouidenc is no leſſe ouer all our actions, all our motions: We cannot goe any whither without him, he tells all our ſteps; ſince it pleaſeth God therefore to take notice of vs, much more ſhould we take notice of him, & walke with

with him, in whom we moue? Saul came beſide his expectation to the Prophet, he had no thought of any ſuch purpoſe, till his ſeruant made this ſudden motion vnto him of viſiting Samuel, and yet God ſaies to his Prophet, *I will ſend thee a man out of the land of Beniamin.* The ouer-ruling hand of the Allmighty workes vs inſenſibly, and all our affaires to his owne ſecret determinations; ſo as whiles wee thinke we doe our owne wills, we do his: Our owne intentions we may know, Gods purpoſes we know not; we muſt go the way that we are called, let him lead vs to what end he pleaſeth; It is our dutie to reſigne our

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our ſelues, and our waies to the diſpoſition of God, and patiently and thankfully to awaite the iſſue of his decrees. The ſame God, that fore-ſhewed Saul to Samuel, now points to him (*See this is the man*), and commands the Prophet to annoint him gouernor ouer Iſrael: He, that told of Saul before he came, knew before he came into the world, what a man, what a King hee would be; yet he chooſeth him out, and inioynes his invnction. It is one of the greateſt praiſes of Gods wiſdome, that hee can turne the euill of men to his own glory: Aduancement is not euer a ſigne of loue, either to the man, or to the place: It had bin better

better for Saul, that his head had bin euer dry, ſome God raiſeth vp in iudgement, that they may fall the more vneaſily; there are no men ſo miſerable, as thoſe, that are great and euill.

IT ſeemes that Samuel bore no great port in his outſide, for that Saul not diſcerning him, either by his habit, or attendants, comes to him, and asks him for the Seer; yet was Samuel as yet the Iudge of Iſrael, the ſubſtitution of his ſonnes had not diſplaced himſelfe: There is an affable familiaritie, that becommeth greatneſſe; It is not good for eminent perſons to ſtand alwaies vpon the height of their ſtate, but ſo to behaue themſelues,

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ſelues, that as their ſociable cariage may not breed contempt, ſo their ouer-highnes may not breed a ſeruile fearefulneſſe in their people.

How kindly doth Samuel intertaine, and invite Saul, yet it was he onely, that ſhould receiue wrong by the future royalty of Saul? Who would not haue looked, that aged Samuel ſhould haue emulated rather the glory of his yong riuall, and haue looked churliſhly vpon the man, that ſhould rob him of his authoritie? yet now, as if he came on purpoſe to gratifie him, hee bids him to the feaſt, he honors him with the cheife ſeat, he reſerues a ſelect morſell for him, he

hee tells him ingenuouſly the newes of his inſuing ſoueraigntie (*On whom is ſet the deſire of all Iſrael, is it not vpon thee, and thy fathers houſe?*). Wiſe and holy men, as they are not ambitious of their owne burden, ſo they are not vnwilling to be eaſed, when God pleaſeth to diſcharge them; neither can they enuie thoſe whom God lifteth aboue their heads: They make an Idoll of honor, that are troubled with their owne freedome, or grudge at the promotion of others.

DOVBTLES Saul was much amaſed with the ſtrange ſalutation, and newes of the Prophet, and how modeſtly doth he put it off, as that, which was neither

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fit, nor likely; diſparaging his Tribe in reſpect of the reſt of Iſrael, his fathers familie in reſpect of the Tribe, and himſelfe in reſpect of his fathers familie; neither did his humilitie ſtoope below the truth: For, as Beniamin was the yongeſt ſonne of Iſrael, ſo he was now by much the leaſt Tribe of Iſrael; they had not yet recouered that vniuerſall ſlaughter, which they had receiued from the hands of their brethren, whereby a Tribe was almoſt loſt to Iſrael; yet euen out of the remainder of Beniamin doth God chooſe the man, that ſhall command Iſrael; out of the rubbiſh of Beniamin doth God raiſe the throne. That is not

not euer the beſt and fitteſt, which God chooſeth, but that, which God chooſeth is euer the fitteſt; the ſtrength or weaknes of meanes is neither ſpurr, nor bridle to the determinate choices of God, yea rather he holds it the greateſt proofe of his freedome, and omnipotencie to aduance the vnlikelieſt. It was no hollow and fained excuſe, that Saul makes to put of that, which hee would faine enioy, and to cauſe honor to follow him the more eagerly: It was the ſincere truth of his humilitie, that ſo deiected him vnder the hand of Gods prophet. Faire beginnings are no ſound proofe of our proceedings and ending well: How

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often hath a bashfull childhood ended in an impudency of youth, a strict entrance in licentiousnes, early forwardnes in Atheisme? There might be a ciuill meeknes in Saul, true grace there was not in him; they that be good, beare more fruit in their age.

SAVL had but fiue pence in his purse to giue the Prophet: The Prophet after much good cheere giues him the kingdome, he bestowes the oyle of royall consecration on his head, the kisses of homage vpon his face, and sends him away rich in thoughts, and expectation; and now least his astonishment should end in distrust, he settles his

his assurance, by fore-warnings of those euents, which he should finde in his way: He tells him whom he shall meet, what they shall say, how himselfe shall be affected; that all these, and himselfe might be so many witnesses of his following coronation; euery word confirmed him. For well might he thinke, He that can foretell me the motions and words of others, cannot faile in mine; especially when (as Samuel had propheſied to him) he found himselfe to propheſie; His propheſijng did enough foretell his kingdom. No sooner did Samuel turne his backe from Saul, but God gaue him another heart, lifting vp his

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thoughts and diſpoſition to the pitch of a King: The calling of God neuer leaues a man vnchanged, neither did God euer imploy any man in his ſeruice, whom he did not inable to the worke hee ſet him; eſpecially thoſe, whom he raiſeth vp to the ſupply of his owne place, and the repreſentation of himſelfe. It is no maruell, if Princes excell the vulgar in gifts, no leſſe then in dignitie: Their crownes and their hearts are both in one and the ſame hand; If God did not adde to their powers, as well as their honors, there would be no equalitie.

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The Inauguration of SAVL.

GOD hath ſecretly deſtined Saul to the kingdome; it could not content Iſrael, that Samuel knew this, the lots muſt ſo decide the choice, as if it had not beene predetermined; That God, which is euer conſtant to his owne decrees, makes the lots to finde him out, whom Samuel had annointed: If once wee haue notice of the will of

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God, we may be confident of the iſſue: There is no chance to the Almighty; euen caſuall things are no leſſe neceſſarie, in their firſt cauſe, then the naturall. So farre did Saul truſt the prediction, and oyle of Samuel, that he hides him among the ſtuffe: He knew, where the lots would light, before they were caſt: This was but a modeſt declination of that honor, which hee ſaw muſt come; His very withdrawing ſhewed ſome expectation, why elſe ſhould hee haue hid himſelfe, rather then the other Iſraelites? yet could he not hope his ſubducing himſelfe, could diſappoint the purpoſe of God: He well knew, that hee, which

which found out and deſigned his name amongſt the thouſands of Iſrael, would eaſily finde out his perſon in a tent? When once we know Gods decree, in vaine ſhall wee ſtriue againſt it; Before we know it, it is indifferent for vs to worke to the likelieſt.

I cannot blame Saul for hiding himſelfe from a kingdome, eſpecially of Iſrael: Honor is heauy, when it comes vpon the beſt termes: How ſhould it be otherwiſe, when all mens cares are caſt vpon one? but moſt of all in a troubled eſtate? No man can put to ſea without danger, but he that launcheth out in a tempeſt, can expect nothing, but

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but the hardeſt euent; ſuch was the condition of Iſrael: Their old enemy the Philiſtims were ſtilled with that fearefull thunder of God, as finding what it was to warre againſt the Allmighty. There were aduerſaries enow beſides in their borders: It was but an hollow truce, that was betwixt Iſrael and their heatheniſh neighbours, and Nahaſh was now at their gates. Well did Saul know the difference betweene a peacefull gouernment, and the perilous and wearifome tumults of warre: The quieteſt throne is full of cares, but the perplexed of dangers. Cares & dangers droue Saul into this corner to hide his head from a crowne:

crowne: Theſe made him chuſe rather to lye obſcurely among the baggage of his tent, then to ſit glorioufly in the throne of State. This hiding could doe nothing but ſhow, that both he ſuſpected, leſt he ſhould be choſen, and deſired he ſhould not be choſen: That God, from whom the hills and the rocks could not conceale him, brings him forth to the light, ſo much more longed for, as he was more vnwilling to be ſeene, and more applauded, as he was more longed for.

Now then when SAVL is drawne forth in the midſt of the eager expectation of Iſrael, modeſtie and goodlineſſe ſhew'd them-

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themſelues in his face: The preaſe cannot hide him, whom the ſtuffe had hid; As if he had bin made to be ſeene, he ouerlookes all Iſrael in height of ſtature, for preſage of the eminence of his eſtate, (*from the ſhoulders vpward was he higher then any of the people.*) Iſrael ſees their lots are fallne vpon a noted man; one, whoſe perſon ſhewed, he was borne to be a King, and now all the people ſhout for ioy; they haue their longing, and applaud their owne happineſſe, and their Kings honor: How eaſie is it for vs to miſtake our owne eſtates? to reioyce in that, which we ſhall finde the iuſt cauſe of our humiliation? The end of a

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thing is better then the beginning; the safest way is to reserue our ioy, till wee haue good proofe of the worthines and fitnes of the obiect. What are we the better for hauing of a blessing, if we know not how to vse it? The office and obseruance of a King was vncowth to Israel: Samuel therefore informes the people of their mutuall duties, and writes them in a booke, and laies it vp before the Lord; otherwise, nouelty might haue beene a warrant for their ignorance, & ignorance for neglect: There are reciprocall respects of Princes and people, which if they be not obserued, gouernment languisheth into confu-

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ſion; theſe Samuel faithfully teacheth them. Though he may not be their Iudge, yet he will be their Prophet; he will inſtruct, if he may not rule; yea he will inſtruct him that ſhall rule: There is no King abſolute, but he, that is the King of all gods: Earthly Monarchs muſt walke by a rule, which if they tranſgreſſe, they ſhall be accountable to him, that is higher then the higheſt, who hath deputed them. Not out of care of ciuilitie, ſo much as conſcience, muſt euery Samuel labour to keepe euen termes betwixt Kings and ſubiects, preſcribing iuſt moderation to the one; to the other obedience and loyalty, which who euer indeuors

uors to trouble, is none of the freinds of God, or his Church.

THE moſt and beſt applaud their new King, ſome wicked ones deſpiſed him, and ſaid, *How ſhall he ſaue vs?* It was not the might of his parents, the goodlineſſe of his perſon, the priuiledge of his lot, the fame of his propheſying, the Panegyrick of Samuel, that could ſheeld him from contempt, or winne him the hearts of all: There was neuer yet any man, to whom ſome tooke not exceptions; It is not poſſible either to pleaſe or diſpleaſe all men, while ſome men are in loue with vice, as deeply, as others with vertue, and ſome (as ill) diſlike vertue, if not for

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it ſelfe, yet for contradiction They well ſaw, Saul choſe not himſelfe, they ſaw him worthy to haue bin choſen, if the election ſhould haue bin caried by voices, and thoſe voices by their eyes; they ſaw him vnwilling to hold, or yeeld, when he was choſen; yet they will enuie him: What fault could they finde in him whom God had choſen? His parentage was equall, his perſon aboue them, his inward parts more aboue them, then the outward; Male-contents will rather deuiſe then want cauſes of flying out, and rather then faile, the vniuerſall approbation of others is ground enough of their diſlike. It is a vaine ambition

tion of thoſe, that would be loued of all: The ſpirit of God, when he inioynes vs peace with all, he adds (if it be poſſible,) and fauour is more then peace; A mans comfort muſt be in himſelfe, the conſcience of deſeruing well.

THE neighbouring Ammonites could not but haue heard of Gods fearefull vengeance vpon the Philiſtims, and yet they will be taking vp the quarrell againſt Iſrael: Nahaſh comes vp againſt Iabeſh Gilead: Nothing but grace can teach vs to make vſe of others iudgements; wicked men are not moued with ought, that falls beſide them; they truſt nothing, but

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their owne ſmart: What feare-full iudgements doth God execute euery day? reſolute ſinners take no notice of them, and are growne ſo peremptory, as if God had neuer ſhewed diſlike of their wayes.

The Gileadites were not more baſe, then Naaſh the Ammonite was cruell: The Gileadites would buy their peace with ſeruilitie, Nahaſh would ſell them a ſeruile peace for their right eyes. Iephtha the Gileadite did yet ſticke in the ſtomach of Ammon, and now they thinke their reuenge cannot bee too bloody: It is a wonder, that he, which would offer ſo mercileſſe a condition to Iſrael, would yeeld

yeeld to the motion of any delay; Hee meant nothing, but ſhame and death to the Iſraelites, yet hee condiſcends to a ſeuen dayes reſpite: Perhaps his confidence made him thus careleſſe. Howſoeuer, it was the reſtraint of God that gaue this breath to Iſrael, and this opportunitie to Sauls courage and victory: The enemies of Gods Church can not be ſo malicious, as they would; cannot approue themſelues ſo malicious, as they are; God ſo holds them in ſometimes, that a ſtander-by would thinke them fauourable. The newes of Gileads diſtreſſe had ſoone filled and afflicted Iſrael, the people thinke of no remedy,

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but their pity and teares; Euills are easily greeued for, not easily redressed: Onely Saul is more stirred with indignation, then sorrow; That God, which put into him a spirit of prophesie, now puts into him a spirit of fortitude: Hee was before appointed to the throne, not setled in the throne, hee followed the beasts in the field, when hee should haue commanded men. Now as one, that would bee a King no lesse by merit, then election, he takes vpon him, and performes the rescue of Gilead; hee assembles Israel, hee leads them, he raiseth the siege, breaks the troopes, cuts the throats of the Ammonites: When God hath

hath any exploit to performe, he raiſeth vp the heart of ſome choſen inſtrument with heroicall motions for the atcheiuement: When all hearts are cold and dead, it is a ſigne of intended deſtruction.

THIS day hath made Saul a compleat King, and now the thankfull Iſraelites begin to inquire after thoſe diſcontented mutiners, which had refuſed allegeance vnto ſo worthy a commander, (*Bring thoſe men, that we may ſlay them*:) This ſedition had deſerued death, though Saul had bin foyled at Gilead; but now his happy victory whets the people much more to a deſire of this iuſt execution. Saul,

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to whom the iniurie was done, hinders the reuenge, (*There ſhall no man dye this day, for to day the Lord hath ſaued Iſrael*) that his fortitude might not goe beyond his mercy. How noble were theſe beginnings of Saul? His propheſie ſhewed him miraculouſly wiſe, his battle and victory no leſſe valiant, his pardon of his rebels, as mercifull: There was not more power ſhewed in ouercomming the Ammonites, then in ouercomming himſelfe, and the impotent malice of theſe mutinous Iſraelites. Now Iſrael ſees, they haue a King, that can both ſhed blood, and ſpare it; that can ſhed the Ammonites blood, and ſpare theirs: His mercy

mercy wins thoſe hearts, whom his valour could not; As in God, ſo in his Deputies mercy and iuſtice ſhould be inſeparable; whereſoeuer theſe two goe aſunder, gouernment followes them into diſtraction, and ends in ruine. If it had bin a wrong offred to Samuel, the forbearance of the reuenge had not bin ſo cõmendable, although vpon the day of ſo happy a deliuerance, perhaps it had not bin ſeaſonable: A man hath reaſon to be moſt bold with himſelfe; It is no praiſe of mercy (ſince it is a fault in iuſtice) to remit an other mans ſatisfaction, his own he may.

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Samuels conteſtation.

EVERY one can be a frend to him that proſpereth; By this victory hath Saul as welll conquered the obſtinacie of his owne people: Now there is no Iſraelite, that reioyceth not in Sauls kingdome. No ſooner haue they done obiecting to Saul, then Samuel begins to expoſtulate with them: The ſame day, wherein they began to be pleaſed, God ſhewes himſelfe angry; All the paſſages of their proceedings offended him, hee deferd

deferd to let them know it till now, that the kingdom was ſetled, and their hearts lifted vp; Now doth God coole their courage and ioy, with a backe reckning for their forwardnes. God will not let his people run away with the arrerages of their ſins, but when they leaſt thinke of it, calls them to an account: All this while was God angry with their reiection of Samuel; yet (as ſi there had beene nothing, but peace) hee giues them a victory ouer their enemies, hee giues way to their ioy in their election, now hee lets them know, that after their peace-offerings, hee hath a quarrell with them. God may be angry enough

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enough with vs, whiles we outwardly prosper: It is the wisdome of God to take his best aduantages; He suffers vs to go on, till we should come to enioy the fruit of our sinne, till wee seeme past the danger, either of conscience, or punishment; then (euen when we begin to be past the feeling of our sinne) we shall begin to feele his displeasure for our sinnes: This is onely where he loues, where he would both forgiue, and reclaime; He hath now to doe with his Israel: But where hee meanes vtter vengance, he lets men harden themselues to a reprobate senselessnes, and make vp their owne measure without contradiction, as purpo-

purpoſing to reckon with them but once for euer.

SAMVEL had diſſwaded them before, he reproues them not, vntill now: If he had thus bent himſelfe againſt them, ere the ſetling of the election, he had troubled Iſrael in that, which God tooke occaſion by their ſin to eſtabliſh; His oppoſition would haue ſauoured of reſpects to himſelfe, whom the wrong of this innovation chiefly concerned: Now therefore, when they are ſure of their King, and their King of them, when hee hath ſet euen termes betwixt them mutually, he lets them ſee, how they were at odds with God: We muſt euer diſlike ſins, we

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we may not euer ſhow it; Diſcretion in the choice of ſeaſons for reprouing, is no leſſe commendable and neceſſarie, then zeale and faithfulnes in reprouing: Good Phyſitians vſe not to euacuate the body in extremities of heat or cold; wiſe mariners do not hoyſe ſailes in euery winde.

FIRST doth Samuel begin to cleare his owne innocence, ere he dare charge them with their ſinne: He that will caſt a ſtone at an offender muſt be free himſelfe, otherwiſe he condemnes, and executes himſelfe in another perſon: The conſcience ſtops the mouth of the guilty man, and chokes him with that ſinne, which

which lyes in his owne breſt, and hauing not come forth by a penitent confeſſion, cannot find the way out in a reproofe; or if he do reproue, he doth more ſhame himſelfe, then reforme another. He that was the Iudge of Iſrael, would not now iudge himſelfe, but would be iudged by Iſrael; *Whoſe oxe haue I taken? whoſe aſſe haue I taken? or to whom haue I done wrong?* No doubt Samuel found himſelfe guilty before God of many priuate infirmities, but for his publike cariage, hee appeales to men: A mans heart can beſt iudge of himſelfe; others can beſt iudge of his actions. As another mans conſcience & approbation can not

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not beare vs out before God; ſo cannot our owne before men: For oft-times that action is cenſured by the beholders, as wrong full, wherein wee applaud our own iuſtice. Happy is that man, that can be acquited by himſelf in priuate, in publike by others, by God in both; ſtanders by may ſee more: It is very ſafe for a man to looke into himſelfe by others eyes; In vaine ſhall a mans heart abſolue him, that is condemned by his actions.

It was not ſo much the tryall of his cariage, that Samuel appealed for, as his iuſtification, not for his owne comfort, ſo much as their conviction: His innocence hath not done him

ſeruice

ſeruice enough, vnleſſe it ſhame them, and make them confeſſe themſelues faulty. In ſo many yeeres wherein Samuel iudged Iſrael, it cannot be, but many thouſand cauſes paſſed his hands, wherein both parties could not poſſibly bee pleaſed; yet ſo cleare doth he finde his heart, and hands, that he dare make the greeued part iudges of his iudgment: A good conſcience will make a man vndauntedly confident, and dare put him vpon any tryall; where his owne heart ſtrikes him not, it bids him challeng all the world, and take vp all commers: How happy a thing is it for a man to be his owne frend, and patron?

He

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He needs not to feare forraine broiles, that is at peace at home: Contrarily, he that hath a falſe and foule heart, lyes at euery mans mercy; liues ſlauiſhly, and is faine to dawbe vp a rotten peace with the baſeſt conditions. Truth is not afraid of any light, and therefore dare ſuffer her wares to be caried from a dim ſhop-bord vnto the ſtreet dore: Perfect gold will be but the purer with trying, whereas falſhood being a worke of darknes, loues darknes, and therefore ſeeks, where it may worke cloſeſt.

This very appellation cleared Samuel, but the peoples atteſtation cleared him more: Innocency

nocency & vprightnes becomes euery man well, but moſt publique perſons, who ſhall be elſe obnoxious to euery offender. The throne and the pulpit (of all places) call for holines, not more for example of good, then for liberty of controlling euill: All Magiſtrates ſweare to doe that, which Samuel proteſteth hee hath done; if their oath were ſo verified, as Samuels proteſtation, it were a ſhame for the State not to be happy: The ſinnes of our Teachers are the teachers of ſinne; the ſins of gouernors do both command, and countenance euill. This very acquiting of Samuel was the accuſation of themſelues: For how could it be

but faulty to caſt off a faultleſſe gouernor? If he had not taken away an oxe, or an aſſe from them, why do they take away his authoritie? They could not haue thus cleared Saul at the end of his raigne; It was iuſt with God, ſince they were wearie of a iuſt ruler, to puniſh them with an vniuſt.

He that appealed to them for his owne vprightnes, durſt not appeale to them for their owne wickednes, but appeales to heauen from them. Men are commonly flatterers of their owne caſes: It muſt be a ſtrong euidence, that will make a ſinner conuicted in himſelfe; Nature hath ſo many ſhifts to coſen it ſelfe

ſelfe in this ſpirituall verdict, that vnleſſe it be taken in the manner, it will hardly yeeld to a truth; either ſhee will denie the fact, or the fault, or the meaſure; And now in this caſe they might ſeeme to haue ſome faire pretences: For though Samuel was righteous, yet his ſonnes were corrupt. To cut of all excuſes therefore, Samuel appeales to God (the higheſt Iudge) for his ſentence of their ſin, and dares truſt to a miraculous conviction. It was now their wheat harueſt: The hot and dry ayre of that climate did not wont to afford in that ſeaſon ſo much moiſt vapour, as might raiſe a cloud, either for raine, or thun-

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der: He that knew God could, and would do both theſe, without the helpe of ſecond cauſes, puts the tryall vpon this iſſue. Had not Samuel before conſulted with his Maker, and receiued warrant for his act, it had bin preſumption and tempting of God, which was now a noble improuement of faith: Rather then Iſrael ſhall go cleare away with a ſinne, God will accuſe and arraigne them from heauen. No ſooner hath Samuels voice ceaſed, then Gods voice begins: Euery cracke of thunder ſpake iudgment againſt the rebellious Iſraelites, and euery drop of raine was a witneſſe of their ſin, and now they found they had diſ-

pleaſed

pleaſed him, which ruleth in the heauen, by rejecting the man that ruled for him on earth: The thundring voice of God, that had lately in their ſight confounded the Philiſtims, they now vnderſtood to ſpeake fearefull things againſt them. No maruell, if now they fell vpon their knees, not to Saul, whom they had choſen, but to Samuel, who being thus caſt off by them, is thus countenanced in heauen.

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Sauls ſacrifice.

GOD neuer ment the kingdom ſhould either ſtay long in the tribe of Beniamin, or remoue ſuddenly from the perſon of Saul; Many yeeres did Saul reigne ouer Iſrael, yet God computes him but two yeeres a King: That is not accounted of God to bee done, which is not lawfully done; when God, which choſe Saul, rejected him, he was no more a King, but a Tyrant: Iſrael obeyed

ed him ſtill, but God makes no reckoning of him, as his deputy, but as an vſurper.

SAVL was of good yeeres, when hee was aduanced to the kingdom: His ſonne Ionathan, the firſt yeere of his fathers raigne, could lead a thouſand Iſraelites into the field, and giue a foyle to the Philiſtims: And now Iſrael could not thinke themſelues leſſe happy in their Prince, then in their King; Ionathan is the heyre of his fathers victory, as well as of his valour, and his eſtate. The Philiſtims were quiet after thoſe firſt thunder-claps, all the time of Samuels gouernment, now they begin to ſtirre vnder Saul. How vtterly

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is Iſrael diſappointed in their hopes? That ſecuritie and protection, which they promiſed themſelues in the name of a King, they found in a Prophet, failed of in a warriour; They were more ſafe vnder the mantle, then vnder armes: both enmity and ſauegard are from heauen, goodnes hath bin euer a ſtronger guard, then valour: It is the ſureſt policie alwaies to haue peace with God.

WE finde by the ſpoiles, that the Philiſtims had ſome battels with Iſrael, which are not recorded; After the thunder had ſkared them into a peace, and reſtitution of all the bordring Cities, from Ekron to Gath, they had taken

taken new heart, and ſo beſlaued Iſrael, that they had neither weapon, nor Smith left amongſt them, yet euen in this miſerable nakednes of Iſrael, haue they both fought, and ouercome. Now might you haue ſeene the vnarmed Iſraelites marching with their ſlings, and ploughſtaues, and hookes, and forkes, and other inſtruments of their husbandry againſt a mighty & well furniſhed enemie, and returning laded both with armes and victory. No armour is of proofe againſt the Almighty, neither is he vnweapned, that caries the reuenge of God: There is the ſame diſaduantage in our ſpirituall conflicts, we are turned naked

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naked to principalities, and powers; whilſt wee goe vnder the conduct of the Prince of our peace, we cannot but be bold & victorious.

Vaine men thinke to ouer-power God with munition, and multitude: The Philiſtims are not any way more ſtrong, then in conceit; Thirty thouſand chariots, ſix thouſand horſemen, footmen like the ſand for number, makes them ſcorne Iſrael no leſſe, then Iſrael feares them. When I ſee the miraculous ſucceſſe, which had bleſſed the Iſraelites, in all their late conflicts with theſe very Philiſtims, with the Ammonites, I cannot but wonder, how they could feare: They,

They, which in the time of their ſinne found God to raiſe ſuch trophees ouer their enemies, run now into caues, and rocks, and pits, to hide them from the faces of men, when they found God reconciled, and themſelues penitent. No Iſraelite but hath ſome cowardly blood in him: If we had no feare, faith would haue no maiſtery, yet theſe fearefull Iſraelites ſhall cut the throats of thoſe confident Philiſtims; Doubt and reſolution are not meet meaſures of our ſucceſſe: A preſumptuous confidence goes cõmonly bleeding home, when an humble feare returnes in triumph. Feare driues thoſe Iſraelites, which dare ſhow their heads

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heads out of the caues vnto Saul, and makes them cling vnto their new King: How troublesome were the beginnings of Sauls honor? Surely, if that man had not exceeded Israel no lesse in courage, then in stature, he had now hid himselfe in a caue, which before hid himself among the stuffe: But now, though the Israelites ran away from him, yet he ran not away from them; It was not any doubt of Sauls valour, that put his people to their heeles, it was the absence of Samuel; If the Prophet had come vp, Israel would neuer haue run away from their King: Whiles they had a Samuel alone, they were neuer well, till they had

had a Saul, now they haue a Saul, they are as farre from contentment, becauſe they want a Samuel; vnleſſe both ioyne together, they thinke there can be no ſafetie. Where the temporall and ſpirituall ſtate combine not together, there can follow nothing but diſtraction in the people: The Prophets receiue and deliuer the will of God, Kings execute it; The Prophets are directed by God, the people are directed by their Kings. Where men doe not ſee God before them in his ordinances, their hearts cannot but faile them, both in their reſpects to their ſuperiors, and their courage in themſelues. Piety is the mother of

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of perfect ſubiection; As all authoritie is deriued from heauen, ſo is it thence eſtabliſhed; Thoſe gouernors that would command the hearts of men, muſt ſhew them God in their faces.

No Iſraelite can thinke himſelfe ſafe without a Prophet: Saul had giuen them good proofe of his fortitude, in his late victory ouer the Ammonites, but then proclamation was made before the fight through all the country, that euery man ſhould come vp after Saul, and Samuel: If Samuel had not bin with Saul, they would rather haue ventured the loſſe of their oxen, then the hazard

zard of themſelues: How much leſſe ſhould we preſume of any ſafety in our ſpirituall combats, when we haue not a Prophet to lead vs? It is all one (ſauing that it ſauours of more contempt) not to haue Gods Seers, and not to vſe them: He can be no true Iſraelite, that is not diſtreſſed with the want of a Samuel.

As one, that had learned to begin his rule in obedience, Saul ſtaies ſeuen dayes in Gilgal, according to the Prophets direction, and ſtill he lookes long for Samuel, which had promiſed his preſence; ſix dayes he expects, and part of the ſeuenth, yet Samuel is not come: The Philiſtims draw neere, the Iſraelites

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lites runne away, Samuel comes not, they must fight, God must be supplicated, what should Saul doe? rather then God should want a sacrifice, and the people satisfaction, Saul will command that, which hee knew Samuel would, if he were present, both command, and execute; It is not possible (thinks hee) that God should be displeased with a sacrifice, he cannot but be displeased with indeuotion: Why doe the people runne from mee, but for want of meanes to make God sure? What would Samuel rather wish, then that we should be godly? The act shall be the same, the onely difference shall be in the person: If Samuel be wanting

wanting to vs, we will not be wanting to God; It is but an holy preuention to be deuout vnbidden: Vpon this conceit, he commands a ſacrifice; Sauls ſinnes make no great ſhow, yet are they ſtill hainouſly taken, the impiety of them was more hidden, and inward from all eyes, but Gods. If Saul were among the Prophets before, will hee now be among the Preiſts? Can there be any deuotion in diſobedience? O vaine man! What can it auaile thee to ſacrifice to God againſt God? Hypocrites reſt onely in formalities; If the outward act be done, it ſufficeth them, though the ground be diſtruſt, the manner vnreuerence,

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the cariage presumption.

What then should Saul haue done? Vpon the trust of God & Samuel he should haue staied out the last houre, and haue secretly sacrificed himselfe, and his praiers vnto that God, which loues obedience aboue sacrifice. Our faith is most commendable in the last act; It is no praise to hold out, vntill we be hard driuen: Then, when we are forsaken of meanes, to liue by faith in our God, is worthy of a crowne: God will haue no worship of our deuising, wee may onely doe, what he bids vs, not bid, what he commands not. Neuer did any true piety arise out of the corrupt puddle of

of mans braine; If it flow not from heauen, it is odious to heauen: What was it, that did thus taint the valour of Saul with this weaknes, but diſtruſt? He ſaw ſome Iſraelites goe, hee thought all would goe, he ſaw the Philiſtims come, he ſaw Samuel came not, his diffidence was guilty of his miſ-deuotion: There is no ſinne, that hath not his ground from vnbeleefe; This, as it was the firſt infection of our pure nature, ſo is the true ſource of all corruption, man could not ſinne, if he diſtruſted not.

THE ſacrifice is no ſooner ended, then Samuel is come, and why came he no ſooner? He

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could not be a Seer, and not know, how much he was lookt for, how troubleſome and dangerous his abſence muſt needs be; He, that could tell Saul, that he ſhould propheſie, could tell, that he would ſacrifice; yet he purpoſely forbeares to come, for the tryall of him, that muſt be the champion of God. Samuel durſt not haue done thus, but by direction from his maſter: It is the ordinarie courſe of God to proue vs by delaies, and to driue vs to exigents, that we may ſhew what we are: He that annointed Saul, might lawfully from God controll him: There muſt be diſcretion, there may not be partiality in our cenſures of the greateſt:

greateſt: God makes difference of ſins, none of perſons, if we make differences of ſins according to perſons, we are vnfaithfull both to God, and man. Scarce is Saul warme in his kingdome, when he hath euen now loſt it: Samuels firſt words after the inauguration, are of Sauls rejection, and the choice and eſtabliſhment of his ſucceſſor: It was euer Gods purpoſe to ſettle the kingdom in Iudah; He that tooke occaſion by the peoples ſinne to raiſe vp Saul in Beniamin, takes occaſion by Sauls ſin to eſtabliſh the crowne vpon Dauid. In humane probabilitie the kingdom was fixed vpon Saul, and his more worthy

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ſonne: In Gods decree it did but paſſe through the hands of Beniamin to Iudah. Beſides trouble, how fickle are theſe earthly glories? Saul doubtles lookt vpon Ionathan, as the inheritor of his crowne, and behold, ere his peaceable poſſeſſion, he hath loſt it from himſelfe: Our ſinnes ſtrip vs not of our hopes in heauen onely, but of our earthly bleſſings; The way to entaile a comfortable proſperitie vpon our ſeed after vs, is our conſcionable obedience vnto GOD.

Ionathans

IONATHANS victory and Sauls oath.

IT is no wonder if Saules courage were much cooled with the heauy newes of his reiection: After this he ſtaies vnder the pomgranate tree in Gibeah, He ſtirs not toward the garriſon of the Philiſtims: As hope is the mother of fortitude, ſo nothing doth more breede cowardlines, then deſpaire: Euery thing diſmaies that heart,

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which God hath put out of protection: Worthy Ionathan (which ſprung from Saul, as ſome ſweet impe growes out of a crabſtock) is therefore full of valour, becauſe full of faith: He well knew, that hee ſhould haue nothing, but diſcouragements from his fathers feare; as rather chooſing therefore, to auoide all the blocks, that might lye in the way, then to leap ouer them, he departs ſecretly without the dimiſſion of his father, or notice of the people; onely God leads him, and his armour-bearer followes him. O admirable faith of Ionathan, whom neither the ſteepnes of rocks, nor the multitude of enemies can

can diſſwade from ſo vnlikely an aſſault? Is it poſſible, that two men, whereof one was weaponles, ſhould dare to thinke of incountring ſo many thouſands? O diuine power of faith, that in all difficulties, and attempts, makes a man more then men, and regards no more armies of men, then ſwarmes of flies! There is no reſtraint to the Lord, (ſaith he) to ſaue with many, or by few: It was not ſo great newes, that Saul ſhould be amongſt the Prophets, as that ſuch a word ſhould come from the ſonne of Saul.

IF his father had had but ſo much diuinitie, he had not ſacrificed: The ſtrength of his God is

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is the ground of his ſtrength in God; The queſtion is not, what Ionathan can do, but what God can do, whoſe power is not in the meanes, but in himſelf: That mans faith is well vnder-layed, that vpholds it ſelfe by the omnipotencie of God; thus the father of the faithfull built his aſſurance vpon the power of the Almighty. But many things God can doe, which he will not doe; How knoweſt thou, Ionathan, that God will be as forward, as he is able, to giue thee victory? For this (ſaith hee) I haue a watchword from God, out of the mouths of the Philiſtims: If they ſay, *Come vp*, we will go vp; for God hath deliuered

uered them into our hands: If they ſay, *Tarie, till we come to you, we will ſtand ſtill.* Ionathan was too wiſe to truſt vnto a caſuall preſage: There might be ſome farre fetcht coniectures of the euent from the word; We will come to you, was a threat of reſolution; Come you to vs, was a challenge of feare; or perhaps, *Come vp to vs* was a word of inſultation, from them, that truſted to the inacceſſiblenes of the the place, & multitudes of men. Inſultation is from pride, Pride argued a fall, but faith hath nothing to do with probabilities, as that, which acknowledgeth no argument, but demonſtration; If there had not bin an inſtinct

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inſtinct from God of this aſſured warrant of ſucceſſe, Ionathan had preſumed in ſteed of beleeuing, and had tempted that God, whom he profeſſed to glorifie by his truſt.

THERE can be no faith, where there is no promiſe, and where there is a promiſe, there can be no preſumption: Words are voluntarie, The tongues of the Philiſtims were as free to ſay, *Tary*, as *Come*: That God, in whom our very tongues moue, ouer-ruled them ſo, as now they ſhall ſpeake that word, which ſhall cut their owne throats: They knew no more harme in *Come*, then *Tary*, both were alike ſafe for the ſound, for the ſenſe; but

but he, that put a ſignification of their ſlaughter in the one, not in the other, did put that word into their mouth, whereby they might invite their owne deſtruction: The diſpoſition of our words are from the prouidence of the Almighty, God and our hearts haue not alwaies the ſame meaning in our ſpeeches: In thoſe words, which we ſpeake at random, or out of affectation, God hath a further drift of his owne glory, and perhaps our iudgment. If wicked men ſay, our tongues are our owne, they could not ſay ſo, but from him, whom they defie in ſaying ſo, and who makes their tongue their executioner.

No

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No ſooner doth Ionathan heare this inuitation, then he anſwers it: He, whoſe hands had learned neuer to faile his heart, puts himſelfe vpon his hands and knees to climbe vp into this danger, the exploit was not more difficult, then the way, the paine of the paſſage was equall to the perill of the enterpriſe; that his faith might equally triumph ouer both, he doth not ſay, how ſhall I get vp? much leſſe, which way ſhall I get downe againe? but, as if the ground were leuell, and the action dangerles, he puts himſelfe into the view of the Philiſtims: Faith is neuer ſo glorious, as when it hath moſt oppoſition, and will not

ſee

ſee it: Reaſon lookes euer to the meanes, Faith to the end, and in ſteed of conſulting, how to effect, reſolues, what ſhall be effected. The way to heauen is more ſteepe, more painefull: O God! how perilous a paſſage haſt thou appointed for thy labouring pilgrims? If difficulties will diſcourage vs, we ſhall but climbe to fall: When we are lifting vp our foot to the laſt ſtep, there are the Philiſtims of death, of temptations, to grapple with; giue vs but faith, & turne vs looſe to the ſpight either of earth, or hell.

IONATHAN is now on the top of the hill, and now, as if he had an Army at his heeles, he flies

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flies vpon the hoſte of the Philiſtims, his hands that might haue bin weary with climbing, are immediately commanded to fight, and deale as many deaths, as blowes to the amaſed enemy: He needs not walke far for this execution; Himſelfe, and his armour-bearer in one halfe acres ſpace haue ſlaine 20 Philiſtims: It is not long ſince Ionathan ſmote their garriſon in the hill of Geba, perhaps, from that time his name & preſence caried terror in it, but ſure if the Philiſtims had not ſeene, and felt more then a man in the face, and hands of Ionathan, they had not ſo eaſily groueled in death: The blowes and ſhrikes cannot but

but affect the next, who with a ghaſtly noiſe ran away from death, and affright their fellowes no leſſe, then themſelues are affrighted: The clamour & feare runs on like fire in a traine to the very formoſt ranks; Euery man would flie, and thinks there is ſo much more cauſe of flight, for that his eares apprehend all, his eyes nothing: Ech man thinks his fellow ſtands in his way, and therefore in ſteed of turning vpon him, which was the cauſe of their flight, they bend their ſwords vpon thoſe, whom they imagine to be the hinderers of their flight; and now a miraculous aſtoniſhment hath made the Philiſtims, Ionathans cham-

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pions, and executioners; He followes, and kills those, which helped to kill others; and the more he killed, the more they feared, and fled, and the more they killed each other in the flight; and that feare it selfe might preuent Ionathan in killing them, the earth it self trembles vnder them. Thus doth God at once strike them with his owne hand, with Ionathans, with theirs, & makes them run away from life, whiles they would flie from an enemy: Where the Almighty purposes destruction to any people, hee needes not call in forreine powers, he needs not any hands or weapons, but their owne; He can make vaste bodies dye no other

other death, then their owne weight: Wee cannot be ſure to be friends among our ſelues, whiles God is our enemy.

The Philiſtims flie faſt, but the newes of their flight ouerrunnes them euen vnto Sauls Pomgranate tree: The watchmen diſcerne a far of, a flight and execution; ſearch is made, Ionathan is found miſſing, Saul will conſult with the Arke: Hypocrites, while they haue leiſure, will perhaps be holy; For ſome fitts of deuotion they cannot be bettered. But when the tumult increaſed, Sauls piety decreaſes: It is now no ſeaſon to talke with a Prieſt; withdraw thine hand Ahaiah, the Ephod muſt giue

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place to armes: It is more time to fight, then to pray; what needs he Gods guidance, when he ſees his way before him? He that before would needs ſacrifice, ere he fought, will now in the other extreme, fight in a wilfull indeuotion: Worldly minds regard holy duties no further, then may ſtand with their own carnall purpoſes; Very eaſie occaſions ſhall interrupt them in their religious intentions; like vnto children, which if a bird do but flie in their way, caſt their eye from their booke.

But if Saul ſerue not God in one kinde, he will ſerue him in another, if he honor him not by attending on the Arke, he will honor

honor him by a vow; His negligence in the one is recompenced with his zeale in the other. All Israel is adiured not to eat any food vntill the euening: Hypocrisie is euer masked with a blinde and thankles zeale: To waite vpon the Arke, and to consult with Gods Preist in all cases of importance was a direct commandment of God; To eat no food in the pursuit of their enemies was not commanded: Saul leaues that, which he was bidden, and does that, which he was not required: To eat no foode all day was more difficult, then to attend an howre vpon the Arke; The voluntary seruices of hypocrites are many times

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more painfull, then the duties inioyned by God.

In what awe did all Israel stand of the oath euen of Saul? It was not their owne vow, but Sauls for them; yet comming into the wood, where they saw the hony dropping, and found the meat as ready, as their appetite; they dare not touch that sustenance, and will rather indure famine, and fainting, then an indiscreet curse: Doubtlesse God had brought those bees thither on purpose to try the constancie of Israel; Israel could not but thinke (that, which Ionathan said) that the vow was vnaduised, and iniurious, yet they will rather dye, then violate it: How

sacred

ſacred ſhould we hold the obligation of our owne vowes, in things iuſt and expedient, when the bonds of anothers raſh vow is thus indiſſoluble?

THERE was a double miſcheife followed vpon Sauls oth, an abatement of the victory, and eating with the blood: For, on the one ſide, the people were ſo faint, that they were more likely to dye, then kill, they could neither runne, nor ſtrike in this emptineſſe; Neither hands nor feet can doe their office, when the ſtomach is neglected: On the other, an vnmeet forbearance cauſes a rauenous repaſt: Hunger knowes neither choice, nor order, nor meaſure: The one of

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theſe was a wrong to Iſrael, the other was a wrong done by Iſrael to God: Sauls zeale was guilty of both: A raſh vow is ſeldome euer free from inconuenience; The heart that hath vnneceſſarily entangled it ſelf, drawes miſcheife either vpon it ſelfe, or others.

Ionathan was ignorant of his fathers adiuration, he knew no reaſon, why hee ſhould not refreſh himſelfe in ſo profitable a ſeruice, with a litle taſte of hony vpon his ſpeare: Full well had hee deſerued this vnſought dainty; and behold this hony is turned into gall: If it were ſweet in the mouth, it was bitter in the ſoule; if the eyes of his body were

were inlightned, the light of Gods countenance was clouded by this act. After he heard of the oath, he pleads iuſtly againſt it, the loſſe of ſo faire an opportunitie of reuenge, and the trouble of Iſrael; yet neither his reaſons againſt the oath, nor his ignorance of the oath, can excuſe him from a ſinne of ignorance in violating that, which firſt he knew not, & then knew vnreaſonable: Now Sauls leiſure would ſerue him to aske counſell of God; As before Saul would not inquire, ſo now God will not anſwer: Well might Saul haue found ſinnes enow of his owne, whereto to impute this ſilence: Hee hath grace enough

enough to know that God was offended, and to gueſſe at the cauſe of his offence: Sooner will an hypocrite finde out another mans ſinne, then his owne, and now he ſweares more raſhly to puniſh with death, the breach of that, which he had ſworne raſhly: The lots were caſt, and Saul prayes for the deciſion, Ionathan is taken: Euen the prayers of wicked men are ſometimes heard, although in iuſtice, not in mercy: Saul himſelfe was puniſhed not a litle, in the fall of this lot vpon Ionathan; Surely Saul ſinned more in making this vow, then Ionathan in breaking it vnwittingly, and now the father ſmarts for the raſhnes of his double

double vow, by the vniuſt ſentence of death vpon ſo worthy a ſonne: God had neuer ſingled out Ionathan by his lot, if he had not bin diſpleaſed with his act: Vowes raſhly made may not be raſhly broken; If the thing wee haue vowed be not euill in it ſelfe, or in the effect, wee cannot violate it without euill; Ignorance cannot acquite, if it can abate our ſinne: It is like, if Ionathan had heard of his fathers adiuration, he had not tranſgreſſed; his abſence at the time of that oath, cannot excuſe him from diſpleaſure: What ſhall become of thoſe, which may know the charge of their heauenly father, and will not?

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not? which do know his charge, and will not keep it? Affectation of ignorance, and willing disobedience is desperate.

Death was too hard a censure for such an vnknowne offence: The cruell piety of Saul will reuenge the breach of his owne charge, so as he would be loath, God should auenge on himselfe the breach of his diuine command: If Ionathan had not found better frends then his father, so noble a victory had bin recompenced with death; He that saued Israel from the Philistims, is saued by Israel from the hand of his father: Saul hath sworne Ionathans death, the people contrarily sweare his preserua-

ſeruation; His kingdome was not yet ſo abſolute, that he could runne away with ſo vnmercifull a iuſtice; their oath that ſauoured of diſobedience, preuailed againſt his oath, that ſauoured too ſtrong of cruelty: Neither doubt I, but Saul was ſecretly not diſpleaſed with this louing reſiſtance: So long as his heart was not falſe to his oath, he could not be ſorry that Ionathan ſhould liue.

Contem-

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Contemplations.

THE THIRTEENTH *BOOKE.*

Contayning

- *Saul and Agag.*
- *The Rejection of Saul, and the choice of Dauid.*
- *Dauid call'd to the Court.*
- *Dauid and Goliah.*
- *Ionathans loue & Sauls enuie.*
- *Michals wife.*
- *Dauid and Abimelec.*

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TO THE RIGHT *HONORABLE*

Sr THOMAS EDMONDS Knight, Treasurer of his Maties Houshold, and of his most Honorable Privy COVNSELL.

RIGHT HO:

After your long and happy acquaintance with other Courts & Kingdoms, may it please you to compare with them the estate of old ISRAEL; *You shall finde the same hand swaying all scepters; and you shall meet with such a proportion of dispositions, and occurrences, that you will say, men are still the same, if their names*

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and faces differ; You ſhall finde Enuie and Mutabilitie ancient Courtiers; and ſhall confeſſe the vices of men ſtill aliue, if themſelues dye; You ſhall ſee God ſtill honouring thoſe that honor him, and both reſcuing innocence, and crowning it. It is not for mee to anticipate your deeper, and more iudicious obſeruations. I am bold to deaicate this peece of my labour to your HONOR, *in a thankfull acknowledgment of thoſe noble reſpects, I haue found from you, both in* FRANCE, *and at home. In lieu of all which, I can but pray for your happines, and vow my ſelfe*

Your Honors in all humble
obſeruance,

IOS. HALL.

Contemplations.

SAVL & AGAG.

GOD holds it no derogation from his mercy to beare a quarrell long, where he hates: He, whose anger to the vessels of wrath is euerlasting, euen in temporall iudgement reuengeth late: The sins of his owne children are no sooner done, and repented of, then forgotten; but the malicious sinnes of his enemies sticke fast

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in an infinite diſpleaſure. (*I remember what Amalek did to Iſrael, how they laid wait for them by the way, as they came vp from Ægypt*): Alas Lord, (might Amalek ſay) they were our forefathers, wee neuer knew their faces, no not their names, the fact was ſo farre from our conſent, that it is almoſt paſt the memory of our hiſtories: It is not in the power of time to raze out any of the arrerages of God; we may lay vp wrath for our poſteritie: Happy is that childe, whoſe progenitors are in heauen, he is left an inheritor of bleſſing together with eſtate, whereas wicked anceſtors looſe the thanke of a rich patrimonie, by the curſe, that attends it;

it: He that thinks, becauſe puniſhment is deferd, that God hath forgiuen, or forgot his offence, is vnacquainted with iuſtice, and knowes not, that time makes no difference in eternitie.

THE Amalekites were wicked Idolaters, and therefore could not want many preſent ſinnes, which deſerued their extirpation: That God, which had taken notice of all their offences, picks out this one noted ſinne of their forefathers, for reuenge: Amongſt all their indignities, this ſhall beare the name of their iudgment. As in legall proceedings with malefactors, one indictement found, giues the ſtile

to their condemnation: In the liues of thoſe, which are notoriouſly wicked, God cannot looke beſides a ſin, yet when he drawes to an execution, he faſtens his ſentence vpon one euill as principall, others as acceſſaries, ſo as at the laſt, one ſinne, which perhaps we make no account of, ſhall pay for all.

The paganiſh Idolatries of the Amalekites could not but be greater ſins to God, then their hard meaſure to Iſrael, yet God ſets this vpon the file, whiles the reſt are not recorded; Their ſuperſtitions might bee of ignorance, this ſinne was of malice: Malicious wickedneſſes of all other,

ther, as they are in greateſt oppoſition to the goodnes and mercy of God, ſhall be ſure of the payment of greateſt vengeance. The deteſtation of God may be meaſured by his reuenge, (*ſlay both man, and woman, both infant, and ſuckling, both oxe, and ſheepe, camel, and aſſe*) not themſelues onely, but euery thing that drew life either from them, or for their vſe, muſt dye: When the God of mercies ſpeakes ſuch bloody words, the prouocation muſt needs be vehement: ſinnes of infirmitie doe but mutter; ſpightfull ſins cry loud for iudgement in the eares of God: Prepenſed malice in courts of humane iuſtice aggrauates the

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murther, and ſharpens the ſentence of death.

What then was this ſinne of Amalek, that is called vnto this late reckning? What? but their enuious and vnprouoked onſets vpon the backe of Iſrael; this was it, that God tooke ſo to heart, as that he not onely remembers it now by Samuel, but he bids Iſrael euer to remember it, by Moſes: *Remember how Amalek met thee by the way, and ſmote the hindmoſt of you, all that were feeble behinde thee, when thou waſt faint & weary.* Beſides this, did Amalek meet Iſrael in a pitcht battell openly, in Rephidim, for that God payed them in the preſent; The hand of Moſes lifted vp on the

the hill, slew them in the valley: Hee therefore repeats not that quarrell, but the cowardly, and cruell attempts vpon an impotent enemy, sticke still in the stomacke of the Almighty: Oppression and wrong vpon euen termes, are not so hainous vnto God, as those, that are vpon manifest disaduantage: In the one, there is an hazard of returne; In the other, there is euer a tyrannous insultation; God takes still the weaker part, and will be sure therefore to plague them, which seeke to put iniuries on the vnable to resist.

THIS sinne of Amalek slept all the time of the Iudges, those gouernors were only for rescue,

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and defence; now, ſo ſoone as Iſrael hath a King, and that King is ſetled in peace, God giues charge to call them to account: It was that, which God had both threatned & ſworne, and now hee chooſes out a fit ſeaſon for the execution; As we vſe to ſay of winter, the iudgements of God do neuer rot in the skie, but ſhall fall (if late, yet) ſurely, yet ſeaſonably: There is ſmall comfort in the delay of vengeance, whiles we are ſure it ſhall looſe nothing in the way, by length of protraction.

The Kenites were the offſpring of Hobab, or Iethro, father in law to Moſes; the affinitie of him, to whom Iſrael owed their

their deliuerance, and being, was worthy of reſpect; but it was the mercy of that good and wiſe Midianite ſhewed vnto Iſrael in the wildernes, by his graue aduiſe, cheerefull gratulation, and aide, which wonne this gratefull forbearance of his poſterity: He that is not leſſe in mercy, then in iuſtice, as he challenged Amaleks ſin of their ſucceeding generations, ſo he deriues the recompence of Iethros kindnes, vnto his far-deſcended iſſue: Thoſe, that were vnborne many ages after Iethro's death, receiue life from his duſt, and fauour from his hoſpitalitie; The name of their dead grandfather ſaues them from the common deſtruction

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ction of their neighbours. The ſeruices of our loue to Gods children are neuer thankleſſe, when wee are dead and rotten, they ſhall liue, and procure bleſſings to thoſe, which neuer knew perhaps, nor heard of their progenitors: If we ſowe good workes, ſucceſſion ſhall reape them, and we ſhall be happy in making them ſo.

The Kenites dwelt in the borders of Amalek, but in tents, (as did their iſſue the Rechabites) ſo as they might remoue with eaſe: They are warned to ſhift their habitations, leſt they ſhould periſh with ill neighbours: It is the manner of God, firſt to ſeparate, before he iudge, as a good husband

husband weeds his corne, ere it be ripe for the ſickle, and goes to the fanne, ere he go to the fire: When the Kenites pack vp their fardels, it is time to expect iudgment; Why ſhould not we imitate God, and ſeparate our ſelues that we may not be iudged? ſeparate, not one Kenite from another, but euery Kenite from among the Amalekites, elſe if we will needs liue with Amalek, we cannot thinke much to dye with him.

THE Kenites are no ſooner remoued, then Saul falls vpon the Amalekites: He deſtroyes all the people, but ſpares their King: The charge of God was vniuerſall, for man and beaſt:

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In the corruption of partiality, lightly the greateſt eſcape: Couetouſnes, or miſ-affection are commonly guilty of the impunitie of thoſe, which are at once moſt eminent in dignitie, and in offence: It is a ſhamefull hypocriſie to make our commoditie the meaſure and rule of our executions of Gods command, and vnder pretence of godlines to pretend gaine: The vnprofitable vulgar muſt dye; Agag may yeeld a rich ranſome: The leane and feeble cattle, that would but ſpend ſtouer, and dye alone, ſhall periſh by the ſword of Iſrael, the beſt may ſtock the grounds, and furniſh the markets. O hypocrites, did God ſend you for gaine,

gaine, or for reuenge? Went you to be purueyors, or executioners? If you plead, that all thoſe wealthy herds had bin but loſt in a ſpeedy death, thinke yee that he knew not this, which commanded it? Can that be loſt, which is deuoted to the will of the owner, & creator? Or can ye think to gaine any thing by diſobedience? That man can neuer either do wel, or farewell, which thinks, there can be more profit in any thing, then in his obedience to his maker: Becauſe Saul ſpared the beſt of the men, the people ſpared the beſt of the cattle, ech is willing to fauour other in the ſinne: The ſinnes of the great command imitation,

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tion, and doe as ſeldome goe without attendants, as their perſons.

Saul knew well, how much he had done amiſſe, and yet dare meet Samuel, and can ſay, *Bleſſed be thou of the Lord, I haue fulfilled the commandement of the Lord*: His heart knew, that his tongue was as falſe, as his hands had bin, and if his heart had not bin more falſe, then either of them, neither of them had bin ſo groſſe in their falſhood: If hypocriſie were not either fooliſh, or impudent, ſhe durſt not ſhow her head to a Seer of God. Could Saul thinke, that Samuel knew of the aſſes that were loſt, and did not know of the oxen and ſheep,

ſheep, that were ſpared? Could he foretell his thoughts, when it was, and now not know of his open actions? Much leſſe when we haue to doe with God himſelfe, would diſſimulation preſume either of ſafety or ſecrecy? Can the God that made the heart not know it? Can he, that comprehends all things, be ſhut out of our cloſe corners? Saul was otherwiſe crafty enough, yet herein his ſimplicitie is palpable: Sin can beſot euen the wiſeſt man, and there was neuer but folly in wickednes.

No man brags ſo much of holines, as hee that wants it: True obedience is ioyned euer with humilitie, and feare of vn-

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knowne errors; Falſhood is bold, and can ſay, *I haue fulfilled the commandment of the Lord*; If Saul had bin truly obſequious, and holy, he had made no noiſe of it: A gracious heart is not a blab of his tongue, but reſts and reioyceth ſilently in the conſcience of a ſecret goodnes, thoſe veſſels yeeld moſt ſound, that haue the leaſt liquor: Samuel had reaſon to beleeue the ſheep, and oxen aboue Saul; their bleating and lowing was a ſufficient conviction of a denied, and outfaced diſobedience: God opened their mouthes to accuſe Saul of their life, and his falſhood; but, as ſin is crafty, and neuer wanted a cloke, where with

with both to hide and deck it ſelfe, euen this very rebellion is holy: Firſt the act, if it were euill, was not mine, but the peoples; and ſecondly, their intention makes it good. For theſe flocks and herds were preſerued, not for gaine, but for deuotion: What needs this quarrell? If any gaine by this act, it is the Lord thy God: His Altars ſhall ſmoke with theſe ſacrifices, yee, that ſerue at them, ſhall fare ſo much the better; this godly thriftines lookes for thanks rather then cenſure. If Saul had beene in Samuels clothes, perhaps this anſwer would haue ſatisfied him: Surely himſelfe ſtands out in it, as that whereto hee dare

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truſt, and after he heares of Gods angry reproofe, he auowes, and doubles his hold of his innocency; as if the commanders ſhold not anſwer for the known ſins of the people; as if our intentions could iuſtifie vs to God, againſt God. How much adoe it is to bring ſinners vpon their knees, & to make their tongues accuſe their hands? But it is no halting with the maker of the heart: He knew, it was couetouſnes, and not piety, which was acceſſarie to this forbearance; and if it had bin as was pretended, hee knew it was an odious impiety to raiſe deuotion out of diſobedience: Saul ſhall heare and finde, that hee hath

hath delt no leſſe wickedly in ſparing an Agag, then in killing an innocent Iſraelite; in ſparing theſe beaſts for ſacrifice, then in ſacrificing beaſts that had bin vncleane? Why was ſacrifice it ſelfe good, but becauſe it was commanded? What difference was there betwixt ſlaughter and ſacifice, but obedience? To ſacrifice diſobediently is wilfully to mocke God in honoring him.

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The rejection of Saul and the choice of Dauid.

EVEN when Saul had abandoned God in disobedience, hee would not forgoe Samuel, yea though he reproued him; when he had forsaken the substance, yet hee would maintaine the formalitie; If he cannot hold the man, he will keepe the pledge of his garment, such was the violence of Sauls desire, that he will rather rend Samuels coat, then part with his person.

Litle

Litle did Saul thinke, that he had in his hand the pawne of his owne rejection, that this act of kinde importunitie ſhould carry in it a preſage of his iudgement, yet ſo it did; This very rending of the coate was a reall propheſie, and did bode no leſſe, then the rending of the kingdome from him, and his poſteritie: Wicked men, whiles they thinke by carnall meanes to make their peace, plunge themſelues deeper into miſery.

ANY ſtander by would haue ſaid, what a good King is this? how deere is Gods Prophet vnto him? how happy is Iſrael in ſuch a Prince, as thus loues the meſſengers of God? Samuel,

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that ſaw the bottom of this hollow affection, reiects him, whom God had reiected; he was taught to looke vpon Saul, not as a King, but as an offender, and therefore refuſes with no leſſe vehemencie, then Saul intreated: It was one thing, what he might doe, as a ſubiect, another what he muſt doe, as a Prophet; Now he knowes not Saul any otherwiſe, then as ſo much the greater treſpaſſer, as his place was higher; and therefore hee doth no more ſpare his greatnes, then the God againſt whom he ſinned; Neither doth hee countenance that man with his preſence, on whom he ſees God to frowne.

THERE needs no other Character

racter of hypocriſie, then Saul in the cariage of this one buſineſſe with Agag and Samuel: Firſt he obeyes God where there is no gaine in diſobedience, then he ſerues God by halues, and diſobeyes, where the obedience might be loſſe: He giues God of the worſt; he doth that in a colour, which might ſeeme anſwerable to the charge of God; He reſpects perſons in the execution; He giues good words, when his deeds were euill; He proteſts his obedience againſt his conſcience; He faces out his proteſtation againſt a reproofe; When hee ſees no remedy hee acknowledges the fact, denies the ſin, yea he iuſtifies the act by

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a profitable intention; When he can no longer maintaine his innocence, he casts the blame from himselfe vpon the people; He confesseth not, till the sinne be wrung from his mouth; Hee seeks his peace out of himselfe, and relies more vpon anothers virtue, then his owne penitency; He would cloke his guiltinesse with the holinesse of anothers presence; He is more tormented with the danger & damage of his sin, then with the offence; He cares to hold in with men, in what termes soeuer hee stands with God; Hee fashionably serues that God, whom he hath not cared to reconcile by his repentance: No maruell if God

caſt him off, whoſe beſt was diſſimulation.

Old Samuel is forced to do a double execution, and that vpon no leſſe then two Kings: The one vpon Saul, in diuiding the kingdome from him, who had diuided himſelf from God; The other vpon Agag, in diuiding him in peeces, whom Saul ſhould haue diuided. Thoſe holy hands were not vſed to ſuch ſacrifices, yet did he neuer ſpill blood more acceptably: If Saul had bin truly penitent, he had in a deſire of ſatisfaction preuented the hand of Samuel in this ſlaughter; Now he coldly ſtands ſtill, and ſuffers the weake hands of an aged Prophet to be imbrued

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brued with that blood, which he was commanded to shed. If Saul might not sacrifice in the absence of Samuel, yet Samuel might kill in the presence of Saul: Hee was yet a Iudge of Israel, although he suspended the execution: In Sauls neglect, this charge reuerted to him; God loues iust executions so well, that he will hardly take them ill at any hands.

I do not finde, that the slaughter of Agag troubled Samuel; that other act of his seueritie vpon Saul, though it drew no blood, yet stroke him in the striking, and fetched teares from his eyes. Good Samuel mourned for him, that had not grace to

mourne

mourne for himselfe: No man in all Israel might seeme to haue so much reason to reioyce in Sauls ruine, as Samuel, since that hee knew him raised vp in despight of his gouernment; yet he mournes more for him, then he did for his sonnes, for himselfe; It greeued him to see the plant, which hee had set in the garden of Israel, thus soone withered: It is an vnnaturall senselessnes not to bee affected with the dangers, with the sins of our gouernors: God did not blame this sorrow, but moderated it; *How long wilt thou mourne for Saul?* It was not the affection he forbad, but the measure; In this is the difference betwixt good

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good men and euill, that euill men mourne not for their own ſins, good men do ſo mourne for the ſins of others, that they will hardly be taken off.

If Samuel mourne becauſe Saul hath caſt away God by his ſinne, he muſt ceaſe to mourne, becauſe God hath caſt away Saul from raigning ouer Iſrael in his iuſt puniſhment: A good heart hath learn'd to reſt it ſelfe vpon the iuſtice of Gods decree, and forgets all earthly reſpects, when it lookes vp to heauen. So did God meane to ſhew his diſpleaſure againſt the perſon of Saul, that he would ſhow fauour to Iſrael, he will not therefore bereaue them of a King, but change

change him for a better: Either Saul had ſlandred his people, or elſe they were partners with him in the diſobedience; yet(becauſe it was their rulers fault,that they were not ouer-ruled) we do not heare of their ſmarting, any otherwiſe,then in the ſubiection to ſuch a King,as was not loyall to God: The loſſe of Saul is their gaine; the gouernment of their firſt King was abortiue, no maruell if it held not. Now was the maturitie of that State, and therefore God will bring them forth a kindly Monarchy ſetled where it ſhould: Kings are of Gods prouiding, it is good reaſon he ſhould make choice of his own deputies; but where

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where goodnes meets with ſoueraignty, both his right, and his gift are doubled: If Kings were meerly from the earth, what needs a Prophet to bee ſeene in the choice, or inauguration? The hand of Samuel doth not now beare the ſcepter to rule Iſrael, but it beares the horne for the annointing of him, that muſt rule: Saul was ſent to him, when the time was to be annointed; but now, he is ſent to annoint Dauid: Then Iſrael ſought a King for themſelues, now God ſeeks a King for Iſrael: The Prophet is therefore directed to the houſe of Iſhai the Bethleemite, the grand-child of Ruth; now is the faithfull loue of

of that good Moabites crowned with the honor of a kingdome, in the succeeding generation: God fetcht her out of Moab, to bring a King vnto Israel: Whiles Orpah wants bread in her owne countrey, Ruth is growne a great Lady in Bethleem, and is aduanced to be great grandmother to the King of Israel. The retributions of God are bountifull; neuer any man forsooke ought for his sake, and complained of an hard bargaine.

EVEN the best of Gods saints want not their infirmities; He that neuer replied, when hee was sent to reproue the King, moueth doubts, when he is bid-

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den to goe, and annoint his ſucceſſor. (*How can I goe? If Saul heare it he will kill mee.*) Perhaps deſire of full direction drew from him this queſtion, but not without a mixture of diffidence; For the manner of doing it, doth not ſo much trouble him, as the ſucceſſe: It is not to be expected, that the moſt faithfull hearts ſhould be alwaies in an equall height of reſolution. God doth not chide Samuel, but inſtruct him: He, which is wiſdome it ſelfe, teacheth him to hide his counſels in an honeſt policie: (*Take an Heifar with thee, and ſay, I am come to do ſacrifice to the Lord*). This was to ſay true, not to ſay all: Truth may not be croſſed by

by denialls, or equiuocations, it may be concealed in a diſcreet ſilence: except in the caſe of an oath, no man is bound to ſpeake all he knowes; we are not only allowed, but commanded to be innocently ſerpentine. There were doubtles heifars enow in Bethleem, Iſhai had both wealth and deuotion enough to haue beſtowed a ſacrifice vpon God, and his Prophet: But to giue a more perfect colour to his intention, Samuel muſt take an heifar with him: The act it ſelfe was ſerious and neceſſarie; There was no place, no time, wherein it was not fit for a Samuel to offer peace-offrings vnto God; but when a King

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ſhould be annointed, there was no leſſe then neceſſitie in this ſeruice. Thoſe, which muſt repreſent God to the world, ought to be conſecrated to that maieſtie, whom they reſemble, by publike deuotions: Euery important action requires a ſacrifice to bleſſe it, much more that act, which imports the whole Church, or Common-wealth.

It was great newes to ſee Samuel at Bethleem, hee was no gadder abroad, none but neceſſarie occaſions could make him ſtirre from Ramah: The Elders of the Citie therefore, welcome him with trembling, not for that they were affraid of him, but of themſelues; they knew, that

that gueſt would not come to them for familiaritie, ſtreight do they ſuſpect, it was the purpoſe of ſome iudgment, that drew him thither: *Com'ſt thou peaceably?* It is a good thing to ſtand in awe of Gods meſſengers, and to hold good termes with them vpon all occaſions: The Bethlemites are glad to heare of no other errand, but a ſacrifice; and now muſt they ſanctifie themſelues for ſo ſacred a buſineſſe: We may not preſume to ſacrifice vnto God vnſanctified, this were to marre an holy act, and make our ſelues more prophane, by prophaning that, which ſhould be holy.

All the Citizens ſanctifie themſelues, but Iſhai & his ſons were in a ſpeciall faſhion ſanctified by Samuel: This buſineſſe was moſt theirs, and all Iſrael in them; the more God hath to do with vs, the more holy ſhould we be. With what deſire did Samuel looke vpon the ſonnes of Iſhai, that hee might ſee the face of the man, whom God had choſen? And now, when Eliab the eldeſt ſonne came forth, a man of a goodly preſence, whoſe perſon ſeemed fit to ſucceede Saul, he thinks with himſelfe; This choice is ſoone made, I haue already eſpied the head, on which I muſt ſpend this holy oyle; This is the man, which hath

hath both the priuiledge of nature in his primogeniture, and of outward goodlineſſe in proportion: Surely the Lords annointed is before him. Euen the holieſt Prophet, when hee goes without God, runs into error: The beſt iudgment is ſubiect to deceit; It is no truſting any mortall man, when hee ſpeaks of himſelfe: Our eyes can be led by nothing but ſignes and appearances, and thoſe haue commonly in them either a true falſhood, or vncertaine truth.

THAT which ſhould haue fore-warned Samuel, deceiued him; he had ſeene the proofe of a goodly ſtature vnanſwera-

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ble to their hopes, and yet his eye errs in the ſhape: He, that iudges by the inſide both of our hearts and actions, checks Samuel in this miſ-conceit: (*Looke not on his countenance, nor on the height of his ſtature, becauſe I haue refuſed him; for God ſeeth not as man ſeeth*): The King, with whom God meant to ſatisfie the vntimely deſires of Iſrael, was choſen by his ſtature, but the King with whom God ment to pleaſe himſelfe is choſen by the heart. All the ſeuen ſonnes of Iſhai are preſented to the Prophet, no one is omitted whom their father thought capable of any reſpect; If either Samuel or Iſhai ſhould haue choſen, Dauid ſhould neuer

uer haue bin King: His father thought him fit to keep ſheep, his brethren fit to rule men; yet euen Dauid (the yongeſt ſonne) is fetcht from the folde, and by the choice of God deſtined to the throne: Nature, which is commonly partiall to her own, could not ſuggeſt ought to Iſhai, to make him thinke Dauid worthy to bee remembred in any competition of honor, yet him hath God ſingled out to the rule.

GOD will haue his wiſdom magnified in the vnlikelihoods of his election: Dauids countenance was ingenuous, and beautifull, but if it had promiſed ſo much as Eliabs, or Abinadabs

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dabs, he had not bin in the fields, whiles his brethren were at the ſacrifice: If we doe altogether follow our eye, and ſuffer our ſelues to be guided by outward reſpects in our choice for God, or our ſelues; we cannot but goe amiſſe. What do we thinke the brethren of Dauid thought, when they ſaw the oyle powred vpon his head? ſurely (as they were enuious enough) they had too much repined, if they had either fully apprehended the purpoſe of the Prophet, or elſe had not thought of ſome improbabilitie in the ſucceſſe: Either they vnderſtood not, or beleeued not, what God would doe with their brother; They ſaw him

him graced with Gods ſpirit aboue his wont, but perhaps foreſaw not, whither it tended: Dauid (as no whit changed in his condition) returnes to his ſheep againe, and with an humble admiration of Gods graci ous reſpect to him, caſts himſelf vpon the wiſe and holy decree of the Almighty, reſigning himſelfe to the diſpoſition of thoſe hands, which had choſen him; when ſuddenly a meſſenger is ſent from Saul to call him in all haſte, to that Court, whereof he ſhall once be maſter: The occaſion is no leſſe from God, then the euent.

Dauid

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Dauid call'd to the Covrt.

THAT the kingdome is (in the appointment of God) departed from Saul, it is his leaſt loſſe; Now the ſpirit of God is alſo departed from him; One ſpirit is no ſooner gone, but another is come; both are from God: Euen the worſt ſpirits haue not onely permiſſion, but commiſſion from heauen, for the infliction of iudgment. He that at firſt

firſt could hide himſelfe among the ſtuffe, that he might not be King, is now ſo tranſported with this glory, that he growes paſſionate with the thought of forgoing it: Sathan takes vantage of his melancholike dejection, and turns this paſſion into frenzy. God will haue euen euill ſpirits worke by meanes; A diſtempred body, and an vnquiet minde are fit grounds for Sathans vexation: Sauls courtiers, as men that were more witty, then religious, aduiſe him to muſicke: They knew the ſtrength of that skill in allaying the fury of paſſions, in cheering vp the dejected ſpirits of their maſter: This was done like ſome fond

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fond Chirurgian, that when the bone is out of ioynt, laies some soupling pulteſſes to the part, for the aſſwaging of the ach, in the meane time not caring to remedie the luxation.

If they had ſaid, Sr, you know this euill comes from that God, whom you haue offended, there can be no help but in reconcilement; how eaſie is it for the God of ſpirits to take off Sathan? labour your peace with him by a ſerious humiliation; make meanes to Samuel to further the attonement; they had bin wiſe counſellors, diuine Phyſicians; whereas now they doe but skin ouer the ſore, and leaue it rankled at the bottome: The cure

muſt

muſt euer proceed in the ſame ſteps with the diſeaſe, elſe in vaine ſhall wee ſeeme to heale; There is no ſafety in the redreſſe of euills, but to ſtrike at the roote. Yet ſince it is no better with Saul and his courtiers, it is well it is no worſe; I doe not heare either the maſter, or ſeruants ſay, This is an ill ſpirit, ſend for ſome Magitian, that may countermand him: There are forcible enchantments for theſe ſpirituall vexations; If Samuel will not, there are witches, that may giue eaſe: But as one, that would rather be ill, then do worſe, hee contents himſelfe to doe that, which was lawfull, if vnſufficient. It is a ſhame to ſay, that he,

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he, whom God had reiected for his ſin, was yet a Saint to ſome, that ſhould be Chriſtians, who care not, how much they are beholden to the Diuell in their diſtreſſes, affecting to caſt out Diuels by Beelzebub: In caſes of loſſe, or ſicknes they make Hell their refuge, and ſeeke for no patronage, but of an enemy: Here is a fearefull agreement; Sathan ſeeks to them in his temptations, they in their conſultations ſeeke to him, and now they haue mutually found ech other, if they euer part, it is a miracle.

David had liued obſcurely in his fathers houſe, his onely care and ambition was the welfare of the flocke he tended, and

now,

now, whiles his father and his brothers neglected him as fit for nothing but the field, he is talked of at Court: Some of Sauls followers had beene at Iſhai's houſe, and taken notice of Dauids skill, and now that harpe, which he practiſed for his priuat recreation, ſhall make him of a ſhepherd a Courtier: The muſicke, that hee meant onely to himſelfe and his ſheep, brings him before Kings: The wiſdom of God thought fit to take this occaſion of acquainting Dauid with that Court, which he ſhall once gouerne. It is good, that our education ſhould perfect our children in all thoſe commendable qualities, wherto they

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are disposed: Litle do we know, what vse God meanes to make of those faculties, which wee know not how to imploy. Where the Almighty purposes an aduancement, obscuritie can be no preiudice; small meanes shall set forward that, which God hath decreed.

Doubtles old Ishai noted (not without admiration) the wonderfull accordance of Gods proceedings, that he, which was sent for out of the field to be annointed, should now be sent for out of the country into the Court, and now he perceiued, God was making way for the execution of that which he purposed; hee attends the issue in silence,

ſilence, neither ſhall his hand faile to giue furtherance to the proiect of God: He therefore ſends his ſonne laden with a preſent to Saul: The ſame God, which call'd Dauid to the Court, wellcoms him thither; His comelineſſe, valour, and skill haue ſoone wonne him fauour in the eyes of Saul. The giuer of all graces hath ſo placed his fauours, that the greateſt enemies of goodnes ſhall ſee ſomewhat in the holieſt men, which they ſhall affect, and for which they ſhall honor the perſons of them, whoſe vertues they diſlike; as contrarily the Saints on earth ſee ſomewhat to loue in the worſt creatures.

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No doubt Dauid ſung to his Harpe; His Harpe was not more ſweet, then his ſong was holy: Thoſe Pſalmes alone had bin more powerfull to chaſe the euill ſpirit, then the muſicke was to calme paſſions; both together gaue eaſe to Saul; and God gaue this effect to both, becauſe hee would haue Saul traine vp his ſucceſſor: This ſacred muſicke did not more diſpell Sathan, then wanton muſicke invites him, and more cheeres him, then vs: He plaies and danceth at a filthy ſong, he ſings at an obſcure dance: Our ſinne is his beſt paſtime, whereas Pſalmes, and hymnes, and ſpirituall ſongs are torment

vnto

vnto the tempter, and muſicke to the Angels in heauen, whoſe trade is to ſing Alleluiahs in the Chore of glory.

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Dauid and Goliah.

AFTER the newes of the Philistims army, I heare no more mention of Sauls frenzy: Whether the noise of warr diuerted those thoughtfull passions; or whether God for his peoples sake tooke off that euill spirit, least Israel might miscarry vnder a frantick gouernor. Now Dauid hath leisure to returne to Bethleem: The glory of the Court cannot transport him to ambitious vanitie; He had rather be his fathers

thers ſhepheard, then Sauls armour-bearer: All the magnificence and ſtate, which he ſaw, could not put his mouth out of the taſte of a retired ſimplicitie; yea rather he loues his hook the better, ſince he ſaw the Court; and now his brethren ſerue Saul in his ſteed · A good heart hath learnt to frame it ſelfe vnto all conditions, & can change eſtates without change of diſpoſition, riſing and falling according to occaſion: The worldly minde can riſe eaſily, but when it is once vp, knowes not how to deſcend either with patience, or ſafety.

FORTY dayes together had the Philiſtims & Iſraelites faced each other, they pitched on two

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hills one in the ſight of the other, nothing but a valley was betwixt them: Both ſtand vpon defence and aduantage; If they had not ment to fight, they had neuer drawne ſo neere; and if they had bin eager of fight, a valley could not haue parted them: Actions of hazard require deliberation; not furie but diſcretion muſt bee the guide of warre.

So had Ioſhua deſtroyed the giantly Anakims out of the land of Iſrael, that yet ſome were left in Azzah, Gath, and Aſhdod: both to ſhew Iſrael, what aduerſaries their forefathers found in Canaan, & whom they maſtred; as alſo that God might winne glory

glory to himſelfe by theſe ſubſequent executions: Of that race was Goliah, whoſe heart was as high as his head, his ſtrength was anſwerable to his ſtature, his weapons anſwerable to his ſtrength, his pride exceeded all: Becauſe he ſaw his head higher, his armes ſtronger, his ſword and ſpeare bigger, his ſhield heauier then any Iſraelite, he defies the whole hoſt, and walking between the two armies, braues all Iſraël with a challenge; (*Why are yee come out to ſet your battaile in aray? Am not I a Philiſtim? and you ſeruants to Saul? Chooſe you a man for you, and let him come downe to me: giue me a man, that we may fight together*). Carnall hearts are carried away

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away with presumption of their owne abilities, and not finding matches to themselues in outward appearance, insult ouer the impotencie of inferiors; and as those, that can see no inuisible opposition, promise themselues certainty of successe: Insolence and selfe-confidence argues the heart to be nothing, but a lumpe of proud flesh.

The first challenge of Duell, that euer we finde, came out of the mouth of an vncircumcised Philistim; yet was that in open warre, and tended to the sauing of many liues, by aduenturing one or two; and whosoeuer imitateth, nay surpasseth him in challenge to priuate Duell, in the

the attempt partaketh of his vncircumcision, though he should ouercome, and of his manner of punishment, if in such priuat combats hee cast away his life. For of all such desperate prodigalls wee may say, that their heads are cut off by their owne sword, if not by their owne hand. Wee cannot challenge men, and not challenge God, who iustly challengeth to himselfe both to take vengeance, and to giue successe. The more Goliah challenges, and is vnanswered, the more is he puft vp in the pride of his owne power: And is there none of all Israel, that will answer this champion otherwise then with his heeles? Where

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Where is the courage of him that was higher then all Iſrael from the ſhoulders vpward? The time was, when Nahaſh the Ammonite had made that tyrannous demand of the right eyes of the Gileadites, that Saul could aske vnasked, *What aileth the people to weep?* and could hew his oxen in peeces to raiſe the ſpirits of Iſrael, and now he ſtands ſtill, and ſees the hoſt turne their backe, and neuer ſo much as asks, what aileth the people to flee? The time was, when Saul ſlew forty thouſand Philiſtims in one day, and perhaps Goliah was in that diſcomfiture, and now one Philiſtim is ſuffred by him to braue all Iſrael forty

daves.

dayes; whence is this difference? The ſpirit of God (the ſpirit of fortitude) was now departed from him: Saul was not more aboue himſelfe, when God was with him, then he is below others, now that he is left of God; Valour is not meerely of nature: Nature is euer like it ſelfe, by this rule, hee that is once valiant, ſhould neuer turne coward: But now we ſee the greateſt ſpirits inconſtant; and thoſe, which haue giuen good proofes of magnanimitie, at other times, haue bewrayed white liuers vnto their owne reproch; Hee that is the God of hoſtes, giues and takes away mens hearts at his pleaſure; Neither is it otherwiſe in

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in our ſpirituall combats, ſometimes the ſame ſoule dare challenge all the powers of darknes, which other-whiles giues ground to a temptation; Wee haue no ſtrength, but what is giuen vs, and if the author of all good gifts remit his hand for our humiliation, either we fight not, or are foyled.

David hath now lien long enough cloſe amongſt his flock in the fields of Bethleem, God ſees a time to ſend him to the pitcht field of Iſrael: Good old Iſhai, that was doubtles ioyfull to thinke, that he had afforded three ſonnes to the warres of his King, is no leſſe carefull of their wellfare, and prouiſion; and who

who (amongſt all the reſt of his ſeuen ſonnes, ſhall be pickt out for this ſeruice, but his yongeſt ſonne Dauid, whoſe former & almoſt worne-out acquaintance in the Court, and imployment vnder Saul, ſeemed to fit him beſt for this errand. Early in the morning is Dauid vpon his way, yet not ſo early, as to leaue his flock vnprouided: If his fathers command diſmiſſe him, yet will he ſtay, till he haue truſted his ſheep with a carefull keeper; wee cannot be faithfull ſhepherds, if our ſpirituall charg be leſſe deare vnto vs; if when neceſſity cals vs from our flocks, we depute not thoſe, which are vigilant and conſcionable.

Ere

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Ere Dauids ſpeed can bring him to the valley of Elah, both the Armies are on foot ready to ioyne: He takes not this excuſe to ſtay without, as a man daunted with the horror of warre, but leauing his preſent with his ſeruant, he thruſts himſelfe into the thickeſt of the hoſt, and ſalutes his brethren, which were now thinking of nothing but killing or dying, when the proud champion of the Philiſtims comes ſtalking forth before all the troopes, and renewes his inſolent challenge againſt Iſrael: Dauid ſees the man, and heares his defiance, and lookes about him, to ſee what anſwer would be giuen, and when hee eſpies nothing

nothing but pale faces, and backs turned, hee wonders, not so much, that one man should dare all Israel, as that all Israel should runne from one man: Euen while they flee from Goliah, they talke of the reward, that should be giuen to that encounter, and victory, which they dare not vndertake; so those which haue not grace to beleeue, yet can say, there is glory laid vp for the faithfull. Euer since his annointing, was Dauid possessed with Gods spirit, and thereby filled both with courage, and wisdome: The more strange doth it seeme to him, that all Israel should be thus dastardly: Those, that are themselues emi-

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neur in any grace cannot but wonder at the miſerable defects of others, and the more ſhame they ſee in others imperfections, the more is their zeale in auoyding thoſe errors in themſelues.

Whiles baſe hearts are moued by example, the want of example is incouragement enough for an heroicall minde: Therefore is Dauid ready to vndertake the quarrell, becauſe no man elſe dare do it: His eyes ſparkled with holy anger, and his heart roſe vp to his mouth, when he heard this proud challenger: (*Who is this vncircumciſed Philiſtim, that he ſhould reuile the hoſt of the liuing God?*) Euen ſo,

ô Sa-

ô Sauiour, when all the generations of men ran away affrighted from the powers of death and darknes, thou alone haſt vndertaken, and confounded them.

WHO ſhould offer to daunt the holy courage of Dauid, but his owne brethren? The enuious heart of Eliab conſtrues this forwardnes, as his own diſgrace: Shall I (thinks he) be put downe by this puiſne? ſhall my fathers yongeſt ſonne dare to attempt that, which my ſtomach will not ſerue mee to aduenture? Now therefore hee rates Dauid for his preſumption; and in ſteed of anſwering to the recompence of the victory, (which

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others were ready to giue) he recompenceth the very inquiry of Dauid with a check: It was for his brethrens sake, that Dauid came thither, and yet his very iourney is cast vpon him by them, for a reproch; *Wherefore cam'st thou downe hither?* and when their bitternes can meet with nothing else to shame him, his sheepe are cast in his teeth: Is it for thee, an idle proud boy, to be medling with our martiall matters? doth not yonder Champion looke, as if hee were a fit match for thee? what mak'st thou of thy selfe? or what dost thou thinke of vs? ywis it were fitter for thee to be looking to thy sheepe, then looking at Goliah;

Goliah; the wildernes would become thee better then the fields: Wherein art thou equall to any man thou seest, but in arrogance and presumption? The pastures of Bethleem could not hold thee, but thou thought'st it a goodly matter to see the wars: I know thee, as if I were in thy bosome; This was thy thought, There is no glory to bee got among fleeces, I will goe seeke it in armes; Now are my brethren winning honor in the troopes of Israel, whiles I am basely tending on sheepe, why should not I be as forward as the best of them? This vanity would make thee strait of a shepherd, a soldier, and of a soldier a

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champion; get thee home, fooliſh ſtripling, to thy hooke, and thy harpe; let ſwords & ſpeares alone to thoſe, that know how to vſe them.

It is quarrell enough amongſt many to a good action, that it is not their owne; there is no enemie ſo ready, or ſo ſpightfull, as the domeſticall: The hatred of brethren is ſo much more, as their blood is neerer: The malice of ſtrangers is ſimple, but of a brother is mixt with enuie: The more vnnaturall any qualitie is, the more extreame it is; A cold winde from the ſouth is intollerable: Dauids firſt victory is of himſelfe, next of his brother; Hee ouer-

ouercomes himſelfe in a patient forbearance of his brother, hee ouercomes the malicious rage of his brother with the mildnes of his anſwer: If Dauid had wanted ſpirit, he had not bin troubled with the inſultation of a Philiſtim; If he had a ſpirit to match Goliah, how doth he ſo calmely receiue the affront of a brother? *What haue I now done? is there not a cauſe?* That, which would haue ſtirred the choler of another, allayeth his: It was a brother, that wronged him, and that his eldeſt; neither was it time to quarrell with a brother, whiles the Philiſtims ſwords were drawne, and Goliah was challenging. O that theſe two

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motiues could induce vs to peace; If we haue iniurie in our perſon, in our cauſe, it is from brethren, and the Philiſtims looke on: I am deceiued, if this conqueſt were leſſe glorious, then the following: He is fit to be Gods champion, that hath learned to bee victor of himſelfe.

It is not this ſprinkling of cold water, that can quench the fire of Dauids zeale, but ſtill his courage ſends vp flames of deſire, ſtill he goes on to inquire, and to proffer: He, whom the regard of others enuie can diſmay, ſhall neuer doe ought worthy of enuie: Neuer man vndertooke any exploit of worth, and

and receiued not ſome diſcouragement in the way, This couragious motion of Dauid was not more ſcorned by his brother, then by the other Iſraelites applauded: The rumor flies to the eares of the King, that there is a yong man deſirous to encounter the gyant; Dauid is brought forth: Saul, when he heard of a champion, that durſt goe into the liſts with Goliah, looked for one as much higher then himſelfe, as he was taller then the reſt; he expected ſome ſterne face, and brawny arme; yong and ruddy Dauid is ſo far below his thoughts, that he receiues rather contempt, then thanks: His words were ſtout, his

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his perſon was weake; Saul doth not more like his reſolution, then diſtruſt his abilitie, (*Thou art not able to goe againſt this Philiſtim to fight with him; for thou art a boy, and he is a man of warre from his youth*): Euen Saul ſeconds Eliab in the conceit of this diſparitie, and if Eliab ſpeak out of enuie, Saul ſpeaks out of iudgment; both iudge (as they were iudged of) by the ſtature: All this cannot weaken that heart, w^ch^ receiues his ſtrength from faith: Dauids greateſt conflict is with his freinds; The ouercomming of their diſſwaſions, that he might fight, was more worke, then to ouercome his enemy in fighting: He muſt firſt

firſt iuſtifie his ſtrength to Saul, ere he may proue it vpon Goliah; Valor is neuer made good, but by tryall: He pleads the tryall of his puiſſance vpon the Beare and the Lyon, that he may haue leaue to proue it vpon a worſe beaſt then they; *Thy ſeruant ſlew both the Lyon and the Beare, therefore this vncircumciſed Philiſtim ſhall be as one of them.*) Experience of good ſucceſſe is no ſmall comfort to the heart, this giues poſſibilitie and hope, but no certainty: Two things there were on which Dauid built his confidence, on Goliahs ſin, and Gods deliuerance, (*ſeeing he hath railed on the hoſt of the liuing God: The Lord that deliuered mee out of the*

pawes

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pawes of the Lion and the Beare, he will deliuer me out of the hand of this Philistim). Well did Dauid know, that if this Philistims skin had bin as hard as the brasse of his shield, his sinne would make it penetrable by euery stroke. After all brags of manhood he is impotent, that hath prouoked God: Whiles other labour for outward fortifications, happy and safe were we, if wee could labour for innocence: He that hath found God present in one extremitie, may trust him in the next; Euery sensible fauour of the Almighty, invites both his gifts, and our trust.

Resolvtion thus grounded, makes euen Saul himselfe confi-

confident: Dauid ſhall haue both his leaue, and his bleſſing: If Dauid came to Saul, as a ſhepherd, he ſhall go toward Goliah, as a warriour: The attire of the King is not too rich for him, that ſhall fight for his King and country; Litle did Saul thinke, that his helmet was now on that head, which ſhould once weare his crowne: Now that Dauid was arrayed in the warlike habit of a King, and girded with his ſword, he lookt vpon himſelfe, and thought this outſide glorious; but when hee offred to walke, and found that the attire was not ſo ſtrong, as vnweeldy, and that it might be more for ſhow, then vſe, he laies downe theſe

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theſe accouſtrements of honor, and as caring rather to bee an homely victor, then a glorious ſpoile; he craues pardon to go in no clothes, but his owne; he takes his ſtaffe in ſteed of the ſpeare, his ſhepherds ſcrip in ſteed of his brigandine, and in ſteed of his ſword he takes his ſling, and in ſteed of darts and iauelins, hee takes fiue ſmooth ſtones out of the brooke: Let Sauls coat be neuer ſo rich, and his armour neuer ſo ſtrong, what is Dauid the better, if they fit him not? It is not to be inquired, how excellent any thing is, but how proper: Thoſe things which are helps to ſome may be encombrances to others: An vnmeet

vnmeet good may be as inconuenient, as an accuſtomed euill: If we could wiſh another mans honor, when we feele the weight of his cares, we ſhould be glad to be in our owne cote.

THOSE, that depend vpon the ſtrength of faith, though they neglect not meanes, yet they are not curious in the proportion of outward meanes to the effect deſired: Where the heart is armed with an aſſured confidence, a ſling and a ſtone are weapons enow; To the vnbeleeuing no helps are ſufficient: Goliah, though he were preſumptuous enough, yet had one ſhield caried before him, another he caried on his ſhoulder, neither will

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will his ſword alone content him, but he takes his ſpeare too. Dauids armour is his plaine ſhepherds ruſſet, and the brooke yeelds him his artillery, and he knowes, there is more ſafety in his cloth, then in the others braſſe; and more danger in his peebles, then the others ſpeare. Faith giues both heart, & armes: The inward munition is ſo much more noble, becauſe it is of proofe for both ſoule and body: If wee be furniſhed with this, how boldly ſhall we meete with the powers of darknes, and goe away more then conquerors?

Neither did the qualitie of Dauids weapons bewray more confi-

confidence, then the number: If he will put his life and victory vpon the ſtones of the brooke, why doth he not fill his ſcrip full of them? why will he content himſelfe with fiue? Had he bin furniſhed with ſtore, the aduantage of his nimbleneſſe might haue giuen him hope; If one faile, that yet another might ſpeed: But now this paucity puts the diſpatch to a ſudden hazard, and he hath but fiue ſtones caſt either to death or victory; ſtill the fewer helps the ſtronger faith: Dauid had an inſtinct from God, that he ſhould ouercome, hee had not a particular direction, how he ſhould ouercome. For had he bin at firſt re-

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ſolued vpon the ſling and ſtone, he had ſaued the labour of girding his ſword: It ſeems, whiles they were addreſſing him to the combat, hee made account of hand-blowes, now he is purpoſed rather to ſend, then bring death to his aduerſarie: In either, or both, he durſt truſt God with the ſucceſſe, and before hand (through the conflict) ſaw the victory: It is ſufficient, that we know the iſſue of our fight: If our weapons and wardes vary according to the occaſion giuen by God, that is nothing to the euent; ſure we are, that if wee reſiſt, wee ſhall ouercome, and if wee ouercome, wee ſhall be crowned.

When

WHEN Dauid appeared in the liſts to ſo vnequall an aduerſarie, as many eyes were vpon him, ſo in thoſe eyes, diuers affections: The Iſraelites lookt vpon him with pity and feare, and each man thought; Alas, why is this comely ſtripling ſuffred to caſt away himſelfe vpon ſuch a monſter? why will they let him go vnarmed to ſuch an affray? why will Saul hazard the honor of Iſrael on ſo vnlikely an head? The Philiſtims, eſpecially their great Champion, lookt vpon him with ſcorne, diſdaining ſo baſe a combatant; (*Am I a dog, that thou com'ſt to mee with ſtaues?*) What could be ſaid more fitly? Hadſt thou bin any

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other, then a dog (ô Goliah) thou hadst neuer opened thy fowle mouth to barke against the hoſt of God, and the God of hoſts: If Dauid had thought thee any other then a very dog, he had neuer come to thee with a ſtaffe and a ſtone.

THE laſt words, that euer the Philiſtim ſhall ſpeake, are curſes and brags: (*Come to me, and I will giue thy fleſh vnto the fowles of the heauen, and the beaſts of the field*). Seldome euer was there a good end of oſtentation: Preſumption is at once the preſage, and cauſe of ruine: He is a weake aduerſarie, that can be killd with words: That man, which could not feare the gyants hand, can-

not

not feare his tongue: If words ſhall firſt encounter, the Philiſtim receiues the firſt foile, and ſhall firſt let in death into his eare, ere it enter into his forehead: (*Thou comſt to mee with a ſword, and a ſpeare, and a ſhield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hoſts, the God of the hoſt of Iſrael, whom thou haſt railed vpon: This day ſhall the Lord cloſe thee in my hand, and I ſhall ſmite thee, and take thine head from thee*). Here is another ſtile, not of a boaſter, but of a Prophet: Now ſhall Goliah know, whence to expect his bane, euen from the hands of a reuenging God, that ſhall ſmite him by Dauid, and now ſhall learne too late, what it is to

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meddle with an enemie, that goes vnder the inviſible protection of the Almighty. No ſooner hath Dauid ſpoken, then his foot & hand ſecond his tongue: He runs to fight with the Philiſtim; It is a cold courage that ſtands onely vpon defence: As a man, that ſaw no cauſe of feare, and was full of the ambition of victory, he flies vpon that monſter, and with a ſtone out of his bagg ſmites him in the forehead: There was no part of Goliah, that was capable of that danger, but the face, and that peece of the face; the reſt was defenced with a braſen wall, which a weake ſling would haue tried to batter in vaine: What could Goliah

Goliah feare to ſee an aduerſarie come to him without edge or point? And behold, that one part hath God found out for the entrance of death: He that could haue cauſed the ſtone to paſſe through the ſheild and breſtplate of Goliah, rather directs the ſtone to that part, whoſe nakednes gaue aduantage: Where there is power, or poſſibilitie of nature, God vſes not to worke miracles, but chooſes the way that lies moſt open to his purpoſes.

THE vaſte forehead was a faire marke, but how eaſily might the ſling haue miſſed it, if there had not bin another hand in this caſt beſides Da

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uids? Hee that guided Dauid into this field, and raiſed his courage to this combat, guides the ſtone to his end, and lodges it in that ſeat of impudence: There now lies the great defier of Iſrael groueling and grinning in death, and is not ſuffred to deale one blow for his life, and bites the vnwelcome earth for indignation, that he dies by the hand of a ſhepherd: earth and Hell ſhare him betwixt them; ſuch is the end of inſolence, and preſumption. O God, what is fleſh and blood to thee, whi h canſt make a litle peeble-ſtone ſtronger then a Gyant, and when thou wilt, by the weakeſt meanes canſt ſtraw thine enemies

mies in the duſt? Where now are the two ſheilds of Goliah, that they did not beare off this ſtroke of death? or wherefore ſerues that weauers beame, but to ſtrike the earth in falling? or that ſword, but to behead his Maſter? What needed Dauid load himſelf w^th^ an vnneceſſary weapon? one ſword can ſerue both Goliah, and him; If Goliah had a man to beare his ſheild, Dauid had Goliah to beare his ſword, wherewith that proud blaſphemous head is ſeuered from his ſhoulders: Nothing more honors God, then the turning of wicked mens forces againſt themſelues: There is none of his enemies, but caries with

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with them their owne deſtruction. Thus didſt thou, O ſon of Dauid, foile Sathan with his owne weapon, that, whereby he ment deſtruction to thee and vs, vanquiſhed him through thy mighty power, and raiſed thee to that glorious triumph, and ſuper-exaltation, wherein thou art, wherein we ſhall be with thee.

Ionathans

IONATHANS *loue, and* SAVLS *enuie.*

BESIDES the diſcomfiture of the Philiſtims, Dauids victory had a double iſſue; Ionathans loue, and Sauls enuie, which God ſo mixed, that the one was a remedy of the other; A good ſonne makes amends for a wayward father: How precious was that ſtone, that kill'd ſuch an enemy as Goliah, and purchaſed ſuch a frend as Ionathan? All Sauls

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Sauls Courtiers lookt vpon Dauid, none ſo affected him, none did match him but Ionathan: That true correſpondence, that was both in their faith and valour hath knit their hearts: If Dauid did ſet vpon a Beare, a Lion, a Gyant; Ionathan had ſet vpon a whole hoſt, and preuailed: The ſame ſpirit animated both, the ſame faith incited both, the ſame hand proſpered both: All Iſrael was not worth this paire of frends, ſo zealouſly confident, ſo happily victorious: Similitude of diſpoſitions and eſtates ties the faſteſt knots of affection: A wiſe ſoule hath piercing eyes, and hath quickly diſcerned the likenes of it ſelfe

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in another, as we do no ſooner looke into the glaſſe or water, but face anſwers to face; and where it ſees a perfect reſemblance of it ſelfe, cannot chuſe but loue it with the ſame affection, that it reflects vpon it ſelfe.

No man ſaw Dauid that day, which had ſo much cauſe to diſaffect him; none in all Iſrael ſhould be a looſer by Dauids ſucceſſe, but Ionathan: Saul was ſure enough ſetled for his time, only his ſucceſſor ſhould forgo all that, wᶜʰ Dauid ſhould gaine; ſo as none but Dauid ſtands in Ionathans light, and yet all this cannot abate one iot, or dram of his loue: Where God vniteth hearts,

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hearts, carnall reſpects are too weake to diſſeuer them, ſince that, which breaks off affection, muſt needs be ſtronger, then that which conioyneth it.

Ionathan doth not deſire to ſmother his loue by concealment, but profeſſes it in his cariage and actions: He puts off the robe, that was vpon him, and all his garments euen to his ſword, and bow, and girdle, and giues them vnto his new frend: It was not perhaps without a myſterie, that Sauls clothes fitted not Dauid, but Ionathans fitted him, and theſe he is as glad to weare, as he was to be diſburthened of the other: That there might be a perfect reſemblance,

blance, their bodies are ſuited, as well as their hearts: Now the beholders can ſay, there goes Ionathans other ſelfe; If there bee another body vnder thoſe clothes, there is the ſame ſoule: Now Dauid hath caſt off his ruſſet coat, and his ſcrip, and is a ſhepherd no more, he is ſuddenly become both a Courtier, and a Captaine, and a companion to the Prince; yet himſelfe is not changed with his habit, with his condition: yea rather (as if his wiſdome had reſerued it ſelfe for his exaltation) he ſo manageth a ſudden greatnes, as that he winneth all hearts: Honour ſhowes the man, and if there be any blemiſhes of imperfection,

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fection, they will be ſeene in the man, that is inexpectedly lifted aboue his fellowes: He is out of the danger of folly, whom a ſpeedy aduancement leaueth wiſe.

Ionathan loued Dauid, the ſouldiers honored him, the Court fauord him, the people applauded him, onely Saul ſtomackt him, and therefore hated him, becauſe he was ſo happy in all beſides himſelfe: It had bin a ſhame for all Iſrael, if they had not magnified their champion: Sauls owne heart could not but tell him, that they did owe the glory of that day, and the ſafety of himſelfe and Iſrael, vnto the ſling of Dauid, who in one

one man ſlew all thoſe thouſands at a blow: It was enough for the puiſſant King of Iſrael to follow the chaſe, and to kill them, whom Dauid had put to flight; yet he, that could lend his clothes and his armour to this exploit, cannot abide to part with the honor of it to him, that hath erned it ſo deerly: The holy ſongs of Dauid had not more quieted his ſpirits before, then now the thankfull ſong of the Iſraelitiſh women vexes him: One litle ditty (*of Saul hath ſlaine his thouſand, and Dauid his ten thouſand*) ſung vnto the timbrels of Iſrael, fetcht againe that euill ſpirit, which Dauids muſicke had expelled: Saul needed not the

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torment of a worse spirit, then enuie. Oh the vnreasonablenes of this wicked passiō! The women gaue Saul more, and Dauid lesse, then he deserued: For Saul alone could not kill a thousand, and Dauid in that one act of killing Goliah, slew in effect, all the Philistims that were slaine that day; & yet because they giue more to Dauid, then to himselfe, he that should haue endited, and begun that song of thankfulnes, repines & growes now as mad with enuie, as he was before with greefe: Truth & Iustice are no protectiō against malice; Enuy is blind to all obiects, saue other mens happines: If the eyes of men could be contained within their owne bounds,

bounds, & not roue forth into comparisons, there could be no place for this vicious affection; but when they haue once taken this lawlesse scope to themselues, they loose the knowledge of home, & care only to be imploied abroad in their own torment.

NEVER was Sauls brest so fit a lodging for the euill spirit, as now, that it is drest vp with enuie: It is as impossible, that Hell should be free from Diuels, as a malicious heart; Now doth the frantick King of Israel renue his old fitts, and walks, and talks distractedly; He was mad with Dauid, and who but Dauid must be called to allay his madnesse? Such as Dauids wisdom

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was, he could not but know the termes, wherein he ſtood with Saul; yet in the lieu of the harſh & diſcordous notes of his maſters enuy, hee returnes pleaſing muſicke vnto him: He can neuer be good Courtier, nor good man, that hath not learned to repay, if not iniuries with thanks, yet euill with good. Whiles there was a harpe in Dauids hand, there was a ſpeare in Sauls, wherewith he threatens death, as the recompence of that ſweet melody: Hee ſaid (*I will ſmite Dauid through to the wall*). It is well for the innocent, that wicked men cannot keep their owne councell: God fetcheth their thoughts out of their mouthes

mouthes, or their countenances for a ſeaſonable preuention, which elſe might proceed to ſecret execution: It was time for Dauid to withdraw himſelfe, his obedience did not tye him to be the marke of a furious Maſter; He might eaſe Saul with his muſicke, with his blood hee might not: Twiſe therefore doth hee auoide the Preſence, not the Court, not the ſeruice of Saul.

ONE would haue thought rather, that Dauid ſhould haue bin affraid of Saul, becauſe the Diuell was ſo ſtrong with him, then that Saul ſhould be affraid of Dauid, becauſe the Lord was with him; yet we finde all the feare in Saul of Dauid, none in

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Dauid of Saul: Hatred and feare are ordinary companions: Dauid had wiſdom and faith to diſpell his feares, Saul had nothing but infidelitie, & deiected, ſelfe-condemned, diſtempred thoughts, which muſt needs nouriſh them; yet Saul could not feare any hurt from Dauid, whom he found ſo loyall, and ſeruiceable: He feares only too much good vnto Dauid; and the enuious feare is much more, then the diſtruſtfull: Now Dauids preſence begins to be more diſpleaſing, then his muſick was ſweet; Deſpight it ſelfe had rather preferre him to a remote dignity, then indure him a neerer attendant: This promotion increaſeth

creaſeth Dauids honor & loue; and this loue and honor aggrauates Sauls hatred and feare.

SAVLS madnes hath not bereaued him of his craft: For perceiuing how great Dauid was growne in the reputation of Iſrael, he dares not offer any perſonall, or direct violence to him, but hires him into the iawes of a ſuppoſed death, by no leſſe price, then his eldeſt daughter, (*Behold mine eldeſt daughter Merab: her will I giue thee to wife, onely be a valiant ſonne to mee, and fight the Lords battels*). Could euer man ſpeake more graciouſly, more holily? What could be more graciouſly offred by a King, then his eldeſt daughter? What care could be

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more holy, then of the Lords battels? yet neuer did Saul intend ſo much miſcheife to Dauid, or ſo much vnfaithfulnes to God, as when he ſpake thus: There is neuer ſo much danger of the falſe-hearted, as when they make the faireſt weather: Sauls ſpeare bad Dauid be gone, but his plauſible words invite him to danger: This honor was due to Dauid before, vpon the compact of his victory; yet he, that twiſe inquired into the reward of that enterpriſe, before he vndertooke it, neuer demanded it after that atchieument; neither had Saul the iuſtice to offer it, as a recompence of ſo noble an exploit, but as a ſnare

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to an enuied victory. Charity ſuſpects not: Dauid conſtrues that, as an effect and argument of his Maſters loue, which was no other but a childe of enuie, but a plot of miſcheife; and though he knew his owne deſert, and the iuſtice of his claime to Merab; yet hee in a ſincere humilitie diſparageth himſelfe, and his parentage with a *Who am I?*

As it was not the purpoſe of this modeſty in Dauid to reject, but to ſollicite the proferd fauor of Saul; ſo was it not in the power of this baſhfull humiliation to turne backe the edge of ſo keene an enuie: It helps not that Dauid makes himſelfe meane,

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meane, whiles others magnifie his worth: Whatſoeuer the colour was, Saul ment nothing to Dauid but danger and death; and ſince all thoſe battels will not effect that which he deſired, himſelfe will not effect that which he promiſed: If he cannot kill Dauid, he will diſgrace him; Dauids honor was Sauls diſeaſe: It was not likely therefore, that Saul would adde vnto that honor, whereof he was ſo ſicke already: Merab is giuen vnto another, neither do I heare Dauid complaine of ſo manifeſt an iniuſtice; Hee knew, that the God', whoſe battels hee fought, had prouided a due reward of his patience: If Merab faile,

faile, God hath a Michal in ſtore for him, ſhee is in loue with Dauid; his comelines and valour haue ſo won her heart, that ſhee now emulates the affection of her brother Ionathan: If ſhee be the yonger ſiſter, yet ſhee is more affectionate: Saul is glad of the newes, his daughter could neuer liue to doe him better ſeruice, then to be a new ſnare to his aduerſarie: Shee ſhall bee therefore ſacrificed to his enuie, and her honeſt and ſincere loue ſhall bee made a baite for her worthy and innocent husband· (*I will giue him her, that ſhee may be a ſnare vnto him, that the hand of the Philiſtims may be againſt him*): The purpoſe of any fauour is more then

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then the value of it: Euen the greateſt honors may bee giuen with an intent of deſtruction; Many a man is raiſed vp for a fall. So forward is Saul in the match, that he ſends ſpokes-men to ſollicite Dauid vnto that honour, which he hopes will proue the high-way to death: The dowry is ſet; An hundred fore-skins of the Philiſtims; not their heads, but their fore-skins, that this victory might bee more ignominious; ſtill thinking, why may not one Dauid miſcarry, as well as an hundred Philiſtims? And what doth Sauls enuie all this while, but enhance Dauids zeale, and valour, and glory? That good Captaine little imagi-

imagining, that himſelfe was the Philiſtim, whom Saul maligned, ſupererogates of his maſter, and brings two hundred for one, and returnes home ſafe, and renowmed: Neither can Saul now flie off for ſhame; There is no remedy but Dauid muſt bee a ſonne, where he was a riuall, and Saul muſt feed vpon his owne heart, ſince he cannot ſee Dauids: Gods bleſſing graces equally together with mens malice, neither can they deuiſe, which way to make vs more happy, then by wiſhing vs euill.

Michals

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Michals wife.

THis aduantage can Saul yet make of Dauids promotion, that as his aduersarie is raised hyer, so he is drawne neerer to the opportunitie of death; Now hath his enuie cast off all shame, and since those crafty plots succeede not, he directly subornes murtherers of his riuall: There is none in all the Court that is not set on to be an executioner; Ionathan himselfe is sollicited to imbrue

imbrue his hand in the blood of his frend, of his brother. Saul could not but ſee Ionathans clothes on Dauids backe; hee could not but know the league of their loue, yet becauſe hee knew withall, how much the proſperitie of Dauid would preiudice Ionathan, hee hoped to haue found him his ſonne in malice; Thoſe that haue the laundis ſee all things yellow; thoſe which are ouer-growne with malicious paſſions, thinke all men like themſelues.

I do not heare of any reply that Ionathan made to his father when he gaue him that bloody charge; but he waites for a fit time to diſſwade him from ſo cruell

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cruell an iniuſtice: Wiſdome had taught him to giue way vnto rage, and in ſo hard an aduenture to craue aide of opportunitie: If wee be not carefull to obſerue good moods when we deale with the paſſionate, we may exaſperate, in ſteed of reforming; Thus did Ionathan, who knowing how much better it is to be a good frend, then an ill ſonne, had not onely diſcloſed that ill counſell, but when hee found his father in the fields, in a calmer temper, laboured to diuert it: And ſo farre doth the ſeaſonable and pithy Oratory of Ionathan preuaile, that Saul is convinced of his wrong, and ſweares, As God liues, Dauid ſhall

ſhall not dye; Indeed, how could it be otherwiſe, vpon the plea of Dauids innocence, and well deſeruings? How could Saul ſay he ſhould dye, whom he could accuſe of nothiug but faithfulnes? Why ſhould hee deſigne him to death, which had giuen life to all Iſrael? Oft-times wicked mens iudgments are forced to yeeld vnto that truth, againſt which their affections maintaine a rebellion: Euen the fouleſt hearts do ſometimes intertaine good motions; like as on the contrary, the holieſt ſoules giue way ſometimes to the ſuggeſtions of euill: The flaſhes of lightning may be diſcerned in the darkeſt priſons.

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But if good thoughts look into a wicked heart, they ſtay not there; as thoſe that like not their lodging, they are ſoone gone; Hardly any thing diſtinguiſhes betwixt good and euill, but continuance; The light that ſhines into an holy heart is conſtant, like that of the ſunne, which keeps due times, and varies not his courſe for any of theſe ſublunary occaſions.

The Philiſtims warres renue Dauids victories, and Dauids victory renues Sauls enuie, and Sauls enuie renues the plots of Dauids death: Vowes & oathes are forgotten: That euill ſpirit which vexes Saul hath found ſo much fauor with him, as to win him

him to theſe bloody machinations againſt an innocent; His owne hands ſhall firſt bee imployed in this execution; The ſpeare, which hath twiſe before threatned death to Dauid, ſhall now once againe goe vpon that meſſage: Wiſe Dauid that knew the danger of an hollow frend, and reconciled enemy, and that found more cauſe to mind Sauls earneſt, then his own play, giues way by his nimbleneſſe, to that deadly weapon, and reſigning that ſtroke vnto the wall, flees for his life. No man knowes how to be ſure of an vnconſcionable man; If either goodnes, or merit, or affinitie, or reaſons, or oathes could ſecure a man,

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Dauid had bin ſafe; now if his heeles do not more befrend him then all theſe, he is a dead man. No ſooner is he gone then meſſengers are ſped after him; It hath bin ſeldome ſeene that wickedneſſe wanted executioners; Dauids houſe is beſet with murderers, which watch at all his dores, for the opportunitie of blood: Who can but wonder to ſee how God hath fetcht from the loynes of Saul a remedy for the malice of Sauls heart? His owne children are the only meanes to croſſe him in the ſin, and to preſerue his guiltleſſe aduerſary; Michal hath more then notice of the plot, and with her ſubtle wit countermines her father,

ther, for the reſcue of an huſband: Shee taking the benefit of the night lets Dauid downe through a window; Heis gone, and diſappoints the ambuſhes of Saul: The meſſengers begin to be impatient of this delay, and now thinke it time to inquire after their priſoner; Shee whiles them off, with the excuſe of Dauids ſickneſs, (ſo as now her huſband had good leaſure for his eſcape) and layes a ſtatue in his bed; Saul likes the newes of any euill befalne to Dauid, but fearing hee is not ſicke enough, ſends to aide his diſeaſe; The meſſengers returne, and ruſhing into the houſe with their ſwords drawne, after ſome harſh words

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to their imagined charge, ſurprize a ſicke ſtatue lying with a pillow vnder his head; and now bluſh to ſee they haue ſpent all their threats vpon a ſenſeleſſe ſtocke; and made themſelues ridiculous, whiles they would be ſeruiceable.

But how ſhall Michal anſwer this mockage vnto her furious father? Hitherto ſhe hath done like Dauids wife; now ſhe begins to be Sauls daughter; (*He ſaid to me, Let me go, or elſe I will kill thee*). Shee whoſe wit had deliuered her husband from the ſword of her father, now turnes the edge of her fathers wrath from herſelfe to her husband; His abſence made her preſume of

of his ſafety: If Michal had not bin of Sauls plot, he had neuer expoſtulated with her in thoſe termes, *Why haſt thou let mine enemy eſcape?* neither had ſhee framed that anſwer, *He ſaid, Let me goe*: I doe not finde any great ſtore of religion in Michal, for both ſhee had an image in the houſe, and afterwards mocked Dauid for his deuotion; yet nature hath taught her to preferre an husband to a father; to elude a father from whom ſhee could not flee, to ſaue an husband, which durſt not but flee from her: The bonds of matrimoniall loue are, and ſhould bee ſtronger then thoſe of nature; Thoſe reſpects are mutuall

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which God appointed in the first institution of wedlocke; That husband and wife should leaue father and mother for ech others sake. Treason is euer odious, but so much more in the mariage-bed by how much the obligations are deeper.

As shee lou'd her husband better then her father, so shee lou'd her selfe better then her husband; she saued her husband by a wile, and now shee saues her selfe by a lye; and looses halfe the thanke of her deliuerance, by an officious slander; Her act was good, but shee wants courage to maintaine it; and therefore seeks to the weake shelter of vntruth: Those that do good offices

offices not out of conſcience, but good nature or ciuilitie; if they meet an affront of danger, ſeldome comes off cleanly, but are ready to catch at all excuſes, though baſe, though iniurious; becauſe their grounds are not ſtrong enough to beare them out in ſuffring for that, which they haue well done.

WHITHER doth Dauid flee but to the Sanctuary of Samuel? He doth not (though he knew himſelfe gracious with the ſoldiers) raiſe forces, or take ſome ſtrong fort, and there ſtand vpon his owne defence, and at defiance with his King: but hee gets him to the Colledge of the Prophets; as a man that would

ſeeke

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ſeeke the peaceable protection of the King of heauen againſt the vniuſt furie of a King on earth: Onely the wing of God ſhall hide him from that violence.

God intended to make Dauid not a warriour, and a King only, but a Prophet too; As the field fitted him for the firſt, and the Court for the ſecond, ſo Naioth ſhall fit him for the third. Doubleſſe (ſuch was Dauids delight in holy meditations) he neuer ſpent his time ſo contentedly, as when he was retyred to that diuine Academie, and had ſo full freedom to inioy God, and to ſatiate himſelf with heauenly exerciſes: The onely doubt

doubt is how Samuel can giue harbour to a man fled from the anger of his Prince; wherein, the very persons of both giue abundant satisfaction: for both Samuel knew the counsell of God, and durst doe nothing without it; and Dauid was by Samuel anointed from God: This vnction was a mutuall bond; Good reason had Dauid to sue to him, which had powred the oyle on his head, for the hiding of that head which hee had anointed; and good reason had Samuel to hide him, whom God by his meanes had chosen, from him whom God had by his sentence reiected: Besides, that the cause deserued commiseration

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seration; Here was not a malefactor running away from iustice, but an innocent auoyding murder; not a traytor countenanc'd against his Souerayne, but the deliuerer of Israel harbored in a Sanctuary of Prophets till his peace might be made.

Even thither doth Saul send to apprehend Dauid: All his rage did not incense him against Samuel as the abettor of his aduersarie; Such an impression of reuerence had the person, and calling of the Prophet left in the minde of Saul, that hee cannot thinke of lifting vp his hand against him; The same God which did at the first put an awe of man in the fiercest creatures, hath

hath ſtamped in the cruelleſt hearts a reuerent reſpect to his owne image in his Miniſters; ſo as euen they that hate them, do yet honor them.

SAVLS meſſengers came to lay hold on Dauid, God layes hold on them: No ſooner doe they ſee a company of Prophets buſie in thoſe diuine exerciſes, vnder the moderation of Samuel, then they are turned from executioners to Prophets. It is good going vp to Naioth, into the holy aſſemblies, who knowes how wee may bee changed beſide our intention? Many a one hath come into Gods houſe to carpe, or ſcoffe, or ſleepe, or gaze, that hath returned a conuert.

The

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The ſame heart that was thus diſquieted with Dauids happy ſucceſſe, is now vexed with the holineſſe of his other ſeruants. It angers him that Gods ſpirit could find no other time to ſeize vpon his agents, then when he had ſent them to kill: And now out of an indignation at this diſappointment, himſelfe will go, and be his own ſeruant; His guilty ſoule findes it ſelfe out of the danger of being thus ſurprized; And behold Saul is no ſooner come within the ſmell of the ſmoke of Naioth, then hee alſo propheſies; The ſame ſpirit that, when hee went firſt from Samuel, inabled him to propheſie, returnes in the

the ſame effect now that he was going (his laſt) vnto Samuel: This was ſuch a grace as might well ſtand with reiection; an extraordinary gift of the ſpirit, but not ſanctifying: Many men haue had their mouthes opened to propheſie vnto others, whoſe hearts haue bin deafe to God; But this (ſuch as it was) was far from Sauls purpoſe, who in ſteed of expoſtulating with Samuel, falls downe before him; and laying aſide his weapons, and his robes, of a Tyran proues (for the time) a diſciple: All hearts are in the hand of their maker; how eaſie is it for him that gaue them their being, to frame them to his owne bent?

Who

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Who can bee afraid of malice, that knowes what hooks God hath in the nosthrills of men and Diuels? what charmes he hath for the most serpentine hearts?

Dauid

DAVID & AHIMELEC.

WHo can euer iudge of the children by the Parents, that knowes Ionathan was the ſonne of Saul? There was neuer a falſer heart then Sauls; there was neuer a truer frend then Ionathan; Neither the hope of a kingdome, nor the frownes of a father, nor the feare of death can remoue him from

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his vowed amitie: No ſonne could be more officious, and dutifull to a good father; yet he layes downe nature at the foot of grace; and for the preſeruation of his innocent riuall for the kingdom, croſſes the bloody deſignes of his owne parent: Dauid needs no other counſellor, no other aduocate, no other intelligencer then he; It is not in the power of Sauls vnnaturall reproches, or of his ſpeare, to make Ionathan any other then a frend, and patron of innocence: Euen after all theſe difficulties, doth Ionathan ſhoot beyond Dauid, that Saul may ſhoot ſhort of him: In vaine are thoſe profeſſions of loue, which

which are not anſwered with action; Hee is no true frend that (beſides talke) is not ready both to do, and ſuffer.

SAVL is no whit the better for his propheſying; he no ſooner riſes vp from before Samuel, then he purſues Dauid. Wicked men are rather the worſe for thoſe tranſitorie good motions they haue receiued. If the ſwine be neuer ſo cleane waſhed, ſhee will wallow againe: That we haue good thoughts, it is no thanke to vs; that we anſwer them not, it is both our ſin and iudgment.

DAVID hath learned not to truſt theſe fits of deuotion, but flyes from Samuel to Ionathan,

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from Ionathan to Ahimelech; when hee was hunted from the Prophet, he flees to the Prieſt; as one that knew iuſtice and compaſſion ſhould dwell in thoſe breſts which are conſecrated vnto God.

The Arke and the Tabernacle were then ſeparated; The Arke was at Kiriath-iearim, the Tabernacle at Nob; God was preſent with both: Whither ſhould Dauid flee for ſuccour but to the houſe of that God, which had annointed him.

Ahimelech was wont to ſee Dauid attended with the Troopes of Iſrael, or with the Gallants of the Court; it ſeems ſtrange therefore to him, to ſee ſo

ſo great a Peere and Champion of Iſrael come alone; Theſe are the alterations to which earthly greatnes is ſubiect; Not many dayes are paſt, ſince no man was honored at Court but Ionathan and Dauid; now they are both for the time in diſgrace; Now dare not the Kings ſonne in law, brother to the Prince both in loue and mariage, ſhow his head at the Court; nor any of thoſe that bowed to him, dare ſtirre a foote with him; Princes are as the Sunne, and great ſubiects are like to Dialls, if the Sun ſhine not on the Diall, no man will looke at it.

EVEN hee that ouercame the Beare, the Lyon, the Gyant, is

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ouercome with feare: Hee that had cut off two hundred foreskins of the Philiſtims had not circumciſed his own heart of the weake paſſions that follow diſtruſt; Now that he is hard driuen, hee practiſes to helpe himſelfe with an vnwarrantable ſhift: Who can looke to paſſe this pilgrimage without infirmities, when Dauid diſſembleth to Ahimelec? A weake mans rules may be better then the beſt mans actions; God lets vs ſee ſome blemiſhes in his holieſt ſeruants, that we may neither be too highly conceited of fleſh and blood, nor too much deiected when we haue bin miſcarried into ſinne. Hitherto hath

Dauid

Dauid gone vpright, now he begins to halt with the Preiſt of God; and vnder pretence of Sauls imployment, drawes that fauour from Ahimelech which ſhall afterwards coſt him his head.

WHAT could Ahimelech haue thought too deare for Gods annointed, for Gods Champion? It is not like but that if Dauid had ſincerely opened himſelfe to the Preiſt as he had done to the Prophet, Ahimelech would haue ſeconded Samuel in ſome ſecret and ſafe ſuccour of ſo vniuſt a diſtreſſe; whereas hee is now by a falſe colour led to that kindneſſe which ſhall be preiudiciall to his life: Extremities

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of euill are commonly inconſiderate; either for that wee haue not leaſure to our thoughts, or perhaps (ſo as we may be perplexed) not thoughts to our leaſure: What would Dauid haue giuen afterwards to haue redeemed this ouer-ſight?

Vnder this pretence hee craues a double fauour of Ahimelech; The one of bread for his ſuſtenance, the other of a ſword for his defence: There was no bread vnder the hands of the Preiſt but that which was conſecrated to God; and whereof none might taſte, but the deuoted ſeruants of the Altar; Euen that which was with ſolemne dedication ſet vpon the holy

holy Tables before the face of God; a ſacramentall bread preſented to God with incenſe, figuring that true bread that came downe from heauen; Yet euen this bread might in caſe of neceſſitie become common and be giuen by Ahimelech, and receiued by Dauid and his followers: Our Sauiour himſelfe iuſtifies the act of both; Ceremonies muſt giue place to ſubſtance; God will haue mercy and not ſacrifice; Charity is the ſumme and the end of the law; That muſt be aymed at in all our actions; wherin it may fall out, that the way to keepe the law may be to breake it; the intention may be kept, and the letter violated;

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lated; and it may be a dangerous tranſgreſſion of the law to obſerue the words, and neglect the ſcope of God; That which would haue diſpenſed with Dauid for the ſubſtance of the act, would haue much more diſpenſed with him for the circumſtance; The touch of their lawfull wiues had contracted a legall impuritie, not a morall; That could haue bin no ſufficient reaſon why in an vrgent neceſſitie they might not haue partaked of the holy bread: Ahimelech was no perfect Caſuiſt; theſe men might not famiſh, if they were ceremonially impure, But this queſtion bewrayed the care of Ahimelech in diſtributing

ting the holy bread; There might be in these men a double incapacitie, the one, as they were seculars, the other, as vncleane; he saw the one must be, he feared least the other should be; as one that wished as litle indisposition (as possibly might be) in those which should be fed from Gods table.

IT is strange that Dauid should come to the Preist of God for a sword; Who in all Israel was so vnlikely to furnish him with weapons, as a man of peace, whose armour was onely spirituall? Doubtlesse Dauid knew well where Goliahs sword lay; as the noble relique of Gods victorious deliuerance, dedicated

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dicated to the ſame God, which wonne it; at this did that ſuite ayme? None could be ſo fit for Dauid, none could be ſo fit for it as Dauid: Who could haue ſo much right to that ſword as he againſt whom it was drawn, and by whom it was taken? There was more in that ſword then mettall and forme; Dauid could neuer caſt his eye vpon it, but he ſaw an vndoubted monument of the mercifull protection of the Almighty; there was therefore more ſtrength in that ſword, then ſharpnes; neither was Dauids arme ſo much ſtrengthned by it as his faith; nothing can ouercome him, whiles he carries with him that aſſured

ſigne

signe of victory: It is good to take all occasions of renuing the remembrance of Gods mercies to vs, and our obligations to him.

DOEG the master of Sauls herdmen (for hee that went to seeke his fathers asses before hee was King, hath herdes & droues now that he is a King) was now in the court of the Tabernacle, vpon some occasion of deuotion; Though an Israelite in profession, he was an Edomite no lesse in heart then in blood; yet hee hath some vow vpon him, and not onely comes vp to Gods house, but abides before the Lord: Hypocrites haue equall accesse to the publique places,

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places, and meanes of Gods ſeruice; Euen he that knowes the heart, yet ſhuts his dores vpon none, how much leſſe ſhould we dare to exclude any, which can onely iudge of the heart by the face?

Doeg may ſet his foote as farre within the Tabernacle, as Dauid; he ſees the paſſages betwixt him, and Ahimelech; and layes them vp for an aduantage; Whiles hee ſhould haue edified himſelfe by thoſe holy ſeruices, he carps at the Preiſt of God, & (after a lewd miſinterpretation of his actions) of an attendant, proues an accuſer; To incurre fauour with an vniuſt maſter, he informes againſt innocent Ahimelech;

melech; and makes that his act, which was drawne from him by a cunning circumuention: When wee ſee our auditors before vs, litle do we know with what hearts they are there; nor, what vſe they will make of their pretended deuotion: If many come in ſimplicitie of heart to ſerue their God, ſome others may perhaps come to obſerue their teachers, and to pick quarrels where none are; Only God and the iſſue can diſtinguiſh betwixt a Dauid, and a Doeg, when they are both in the Tabernacle. Honeſt Ahimelech could litle ſuſpect that he now offered a ſacrifice for his executioner; yea for the murtherer of all his family:

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mily: Oh the wiſe and deepe iudgements of the Almighty! God owed a reueng to the houſe of Eli, and now by the delation of Doeg, he takes occaſion to pay it; It was iuſt in God, which in Doeg was moſt vniuſt; Sauls cruelty, and the trechery of Doeg do not looſe one dram of their guilt by the counſell of God; neither doth the holy counſell of God gather any blemiſh by their wickedneſſe; If it had pleaſed God to inflict death vpon them ſooner without any pretence of occaſion, his iuſtice had bin cleare from all imputations; now, if Saul and Doeg be in ſteed of a peſtilence or feuer, who can cauill? The iudge-

iudgements of God are not alwaies open, but are alwaies iuſt; He knowes how by one mans ſinne to puniſh the ſinne of another, and by both their ſins and puniſhments to glorifie himſelf. If his word ſleep, it ſhall not dye; but after long intermiſſions breaks forth in thoſe effects which wee had forgotten to looke for, and ceaſed to feare. O Lord, thou art ſure when thou threatneſt, and iuſt when thou iudgeſt; Keepe thou vs from the ſentence of death, elſe in vaine ſhall we labour to keepe our ſelues from the execution.

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Contemplations

VPON THE HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE FIRST BOOKE:

Contayning

- *The Angell and Zachary.*
- *The Annuntiation.*
- *The Birth of CHRIST.*
- *The Sages and the Starre.*
- *The Purification.*
- *Herod and the Infants.*

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TO MY MVCH HONORED, AND RIGHT WORfull FREND, Sr HENRY YELVERTON Knight, Atturney Generall to his Maieſtie.

Right Worſhipfull,

IT is not out of any ſatiety, that I change from the old Teſtament to the new; Theſe two, as they are the breſts of the Church, ſo they yeeld milke equally wholſome, equally pleaſant vnto able nurſelings. Herein I thought good to haue reſpect vnto my reader, in whoſe ſtrength there may be difference. That other breſt perhaps, doth not let downe this nouriſhing liquor, ſo freely, ſo eaſily: Euen ſo ſmall a variety refreſheth a weake infant; Neither will there perhaps

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haps want some palates, which will finde a more quicke and pleasing rellish in this fresher sustenance; These I thought good to please with a taste, ere they come to sate themselues with a full meale of this diuine nourishment; in emulation of the good Scribe, that brings forth both old, and new. If it please God to inable my life and opportunities, I hope at last, to present his Church, with the last seruice of the Historie of either page: wherein my ioy, and my crowne shall be the edification of many. In the meane time, I dedicate this part vnto your name, whom I haue so much cause to obserue, and honor: The blessing of that God (whose Church you haue euer made your cheife Client) be still vpon your head, and that honorable Society which reioyces in so worthy a leader. To it, and your selfe, I shall be euer (as I haue cause) humbly and vnfainedly deuoted

IOS. HALL.

The Angell and Zachary.

WHEN things are at the worſt, then God begins a change: The ſtate of the Iewiſh Church was extreamely corrupted, immediately before the newes of the Goſpell; yet, as bad as it was, not onely the Preiſthood, but the courſes of attendance continued, euen frō Dauids time till Chriſts: It is a deſperately depraued condition of a Church, where no good orders are left: Iudea paſſed

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many troubles, many alterations, yet this orderly combination endured aboue an eleuen hundred yeares: A ſetled good will not eaſily be defeated, but in the change of perſons will remaine vnchanged, and if it be forced to giue way, leaues memorable footſteps behinde it: If Dauid foreſaw the perpetuation of this holy ordinance, how much did hee reioyce in the knowledge of it? who would not be glad to do good, on condition, that it may ſo long outliue him?

The ſucceſſiue turnes of the legall miniſtration held on in a line neuer interrupted: Euen in a forlorne and miſerable Church there

there may be a perſonall ſucceſſion: How litle were the Iewes better for this, when they had loſt the Vrim and Thummim, ſinceritie of doctrine and manners? This ſtayed with them, euen whiles they and their ſons crucified Chriſt; What is more ordinary, then wicked ſonnes of holy parents? It is the ſucceſſion of truth and holines, that makes or inſtitutes a Church, what euer become of the perſons: Neuer times were ſo barren, as not to yeeld ſome good: The greateſt dearth affords ſome few good eares to the gleaners: Chriſt would not haue come into the world, but he would haue ſome faithfull to entertaine him:

He,

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He, that had the diſpoſing of all times and men, would caſt ſome holy ones into his owne times: There had bin no equalitie, that all ſhould either ouer-runne, or follow him, and none attend him. Zachary and Elizabeth are iuſt; both of Aarons blood, and Iohn Baptiſt of theirs: whence ſhould an holy ſeed ſpring, if not of the loines of Leui? It is not in the power of parents to traduce holineſſe to their children: It is the bleſſing of God, that feoffes them in the vertues of their parents, as they feoffe them in their ſins: There is no certainty, but there is likelihood, of an holy generation, when the parents are ſuch: Elizabeth was iuſt,

iuſt, as well as Zachary, that the fore runner of a Sauiour might be holy on both ſides: If the ſtocke and the griffe be not both good, there is much danger of the fruit: It is an happy match, when the husband and the wife are one, not only in themſelues, but in God, not more in fleſh, then in the ſpirit: Grace makes no difference of ſexes, rather the weaker carries away the more honor, becauſe it hath had leſſe helps: It is eaſie to obſerue, that the new Teſtament affordeth more ſtore of good women, then the old: Elizabeth led the ring of this mercy, whoſe barrenneſſe ended in a miraculous fruit both of her body, & of her time. This

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This religious paire made no leſſe progreſſe in vertue, then in age, and yet their vertue could not make their beſt age fruitfull: *Elizabeth was barren*: A iuſt ſoule and a barren wombe may well agree together: Amongſt the Iewes barrenneſſe was not a defect onely, but a reproch, yet while this good woman was fruitfull of holy obedience, ſhee was barren of children: As Iohn, which was miraculouſly conceiued by man, was a fit fore-runner of him, that was conceiued by the Holy Ghoſt, ſo a barren matron was meet to make way for a virgin.

None, but a ſonne of Aaron, might offer incenſe to God in the

the Temple; and not euery ſon of Aaron, and not any one at all ſeaſons: God is a God of order, & hates confuſion no leſſe then irreligion: Albeit hee hath not ſo ſtraitned himſelfe vnder the Goſpell, as to tye his ſeruice to perſons, or places, yet his choice is now no leſſe curious, becauſe it is more large: Hee allowes none, but the authoriſed; Hee authoriſeth none but the worthy: The Incenſe doth euer ſmell of the hand, that offers it; I doubt not but that perfume was ſweeter, which aſcended vp from the hand of iuſt Zachary: The ſacrifice of the wicked is abomination to God: There were courſes of miniſtration in the

the legall ſeruices: God neuer purpoſed to burthen any of his creatures with deuotion: How vaine is the ambition of any ſoule, that would lode it ſelfe with the vniuerſall charge of all men? How thankleſſe is their labour, that do wilfully ouerſpend themſelues in their ordinary vocations? As Zachary had a courſe in Gods houſe, ſo he carefully obſerued it; The fauour of theſe reſpites doubled his diligence: The more high and ſacred our calling is, the more dangerous is our neglect: It is our honor, that wee may be allowed to waite vpon the God of heauen in theſe immediate ſeruices: Woe be to vs, if wee ſlacken

ſlacken thoſe duties, wherein God honors vs more, then wee can honor him.

Many ſonnes of Aaron, yea of the ſame family ſerued at once in the Temple, according to the variety of imployments: To auoide all difference, they agreed by lot to aſſigne themſelues to the ſeuerall offices of each day; The lot of this day called Zachary to offer incenſe in the owter Temple: I do not finde any preſcription they had from God of this particular manner of deſignement: Matters of good order in holy affaires may be ruled by the wiſe inſtitution of men, according to reaſon and expediencie.

It

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It fell out well, that Zachary was choſen by lot to this miniſtration, that Gods immediate hand might be ſeene in all the paſſages, that concerned his great Prophet, that as the perſon, ſo the occaſion might bee of Gods owne chooſing: In lots and their ſeeming caſuall diſpoſition, God can giue a reaſon, though we can giue none: Morning and euening, twiſe a day their law called them to offer Incenſe to God, that both parts of the day might be conſecrate to the maker of time: The owter Temple was the figure of the whole Church vpon earth, like as the holy of holieſt repreſented heauen: Nothing can better

reſemble

reſemble our faithfull prayers, then ſweet perfume: Theſe, God lookes, that we ſhould (all his Church ouer) ſend vp vnto him morning and euening: The eleuations of our hearts ſhould be perpetuall, but if twiſe in the day we do not preſent God with our ſolemne inuocations, wee make the Goſpell leſſe officious, then the law.

That the reſemblance of prayers and incenſe might be apparent, whiles the Preiſt ſends vp his incenſe within the Temple, the people muſt ſend vp their prayers without: Their breath and that incenſe, though remote in the firſt riſing, met, ere they went vp to heauen: The

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people might no more goe into the holy place to offer vp the incenſe of prayers vnto God, then Zachary might go into the holy of holies: Whiles the partition wall ſtood betwixt Iewes and Gentiles, there were alſo partitions betwixt the Iewes, and themſelues: Now euery man is a Preiſt vnto God; Euery man (ſince the vaile was rent) praies within the Temple: What are we the better for our greater freedome of acceſſe to God vnder the Goſpell, if wee doe not make vſe of our priuiledge?

Whiles they were praying to God, he ſees an Angell of God. As Gedeons Angell went vp in the ſmoake of the ſacrifice, ſo

did Zacharies Angell (as it were) come downe in the fragrant ſmoke of his incenſe: It was euer great newes to ſee an Angell of God, but now more; becauſe God had long with-drawne from them all the meanes of his ſupernaturall reuelations: As this wicked people were ſtrangers to their God in their conuerſation, ſo was God growne a ſtranger to them in his apparitions; yet now, that the ſeaſon of the Goſpell approched, he viſited them with his Angels, before hee viſited them by his ſonne: He ſends his Angell to men in the forme of man, before hee ſends his ſonne to take humane forme: The preſence of Angels

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is no nouelty, but their apparition; they are alwaies with vs, but rarely ſeene, that wee may awfully reſpect their meſſages, when they are ſeene; In the meane time our faith may ſee them, though our ſenſes do not; their aſſumed ſhapes doe not make them more preſent, but viſible.

There is an order in that heauenly Hierarchy, though wee know it not: This Angell, that appeared to Zachary was not with him in the ordinary courſe of his attendances, but was purpoſely ſent from God with this meſſage: Why was an Angell ſent? and why this Angell? It had bin eaſie for him to haue raiſed

sed vp the propheticall spirit of some Simeon to this prediction; the same Holy Ghost, which reuealed to that iust man, that he should not see death, ere he had seene the Messias, might haue as easily reuealed vnto him the birth of the fore-runner of Christ, and by him to Zachary: But God would haue this voice, which should go before his son, come with a noise; Hee would haue it appeare to the world, that the harbinger of the Messiah should bee conceiued by the maruelous power of that God, whose comming hee proclaimed: It was fit the first herald of the Gospell should begin in wonder: The same Angell, that

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came to the blessed Virgin with the newes of Christs conception, came to Zachary with the newes of Iohns, for the honor of him, that was the greatest of them, which were borne of women, and for his better resemblance to him, which was the seede of the woman: Both had the Gospell for their errand, one as the messenger of it, the other as the author; Both are foretold by the same mouth.

When could it be more fit for the Angell to appeare vnto Zachary, then when prayers and incense were offred by him? Where could hee more fitly appeare, then in the Temple? In what part of the Temple more fitly,

fitly, then at the Altar of Incenſe? and whereabouts rather, then on the right ſide of the Altar? Thoſe glorious ſpirits as they are alwaies with vs, ſo moſt in our deuotions, and as in all places, ſo moſt of all in Gods houſe: They reioyce to bee with vs, whiles we are with God, as contrarily they turne their faces from vs, when we go about our ſinnes.

He that had wont to liue, and ſerue in the preſence of the maſter, was now aſtoniſhed at the preſence of the ſeruant; ſo much difference there is betwixt our faith, and our ſenſes, that the apprehenſion of the preſence of the God of ſpirits by faith goes

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downe ſweetly with vs, whereas the ſenſible apprehenſion of an Angell diſmaies vs: Holy Zachary, that had wont to liue by faith, thought hee ſhould dye, when his ſenſe began to be ſet on worke; It was the weakneſs of him, that ſerued at the Altar without horror, to be daunted with the face of his fellow ſeruant: In vaine do we looke for ſuch miniſters of God, as are without infirmities, when iuſt Zachary was troubled in his deuotions with that, wherewith he ſhould haue bin comforted: It was partly the ſuddennes, and partly the glory of the apparition, that affrighted him: The good Angell was both apprehenſiue,

lrenſiue, and compaſſionate of Zacharies weaknes, and preſently incourages him with a cheerfull excitation: *(Feare not Zacharias)*. The bleſſed ſpirts, though they doe not often vocally expreſſe it, doe pitty our humane frailties, and ſecretly ſuggeſt comfort vnto vs, when we perceiue it not: Good and euill Angels, as they are contrary in eſtate, ſo alſo in diſpoſition; The good deſire to take away feare, the euill to bring it: It is a fruit of that deadly enmity, which is betwixt Sathan and vs, that hee would, if he might, kill vs with terror; whereas the good ſpirits affecting our releefe and happineſſe, take no pleaſure in terrifying

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ing vs, but labour altogether for our tranquilitie and cheerefulneſſe.

There was not more feare in the face, then comfort in the ſpeech; *Thy prayer is heard*: No Angell could haue told him better newes; Our deſires are vttered in our prayers: What can we wiſh, but to haue what we would? Many good ſuites had Zachary made, & amongſt the reſt for a ſonne: Doubtleſſe it was now ſome ſpace of yeeres, ſince he made that requeſt: For he was now ſtricken in age, and had ceaſed to hope; yet had God laid it vp all the while, and when he thinks not of it, brings it forth to effect: Thus doth the

mercy

mercy of our God deale with his patient, and faithfull ſuppliants: In the feruor of their expectation he many times holds them off, and when they leaſt thinke of it, and haue forgotten their owne ſuite, he graciouſly condiſcends: Delay of effect may not diſcourage our faith, It may be God hath long granted, ere wee ſhall know of his grant. Many a father repents him of his fruitfulnes, and hath ſuch ſonnes, as he wiſhes vnborne: But to haue ſo gracious, and happy a ſonne, as the Angell foretold, could not be leſſe comfort, then honor to the age of Zachary: The proofe of children makes them either the bleſſings, or croſſes of their parents:

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parents: To heare what his ſon ſhould be before hee was; to heare that he ſhould haue ſuch a ſonne; A ſonne, whoſe birth ſhould concerne the ioy of many; A ſonne, that ſhould bee great in the ſight of the Lord; A ſonne, that ſhould be ſacred to God, filled with God, beneficiall to man; An harbinger to him, that was God and man, was newes enough to preuent the Angell, and to take away that tongue with amaſement, which was after loſt with incredulitie.

The ſpeech was ſo good, that it found not a ſudden beleefe: This good newes ſurprized Zachary; If the intelligence had taken

taken leiſure, that his thoughts might haue had time to debate the matter, hee had eaſily apprehended the infinite power of him that had promiſed; the patterne of Abraham and Sara; and would ſoone haue concluded the appearance of the Angell more miraculous then his prediction: Whereas now, like a man maskered with the ſtrangeneſſe of that he ſaw and heard, he miſdoubts the meſſage, and askes: *How ſhall I know?* Nature was on his ſide, and alledged the impoſſibility of the euent, both from age and barrenneſſe; Supernaturall tidings at the firſt hearing aſtoniſh the heart, and are entertained with doubts by thoſe,

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thoſe, which vpon further acquaintance giue them the beſt welcome.

The weake apprehenſions of our imperfect faith are not ſo much to be cenſured, as pitied: It is a ſure way for the heart, to be preuented with the aſſurance of the Omnipotent power of God, to whom nothing is impoſſible: ſo ſhall the hardeſt points of faith goe downe eaſily with vs: If the eye of our minde looke vpward, it ſhall meet with nothing to auert, or interrupt it; but if right forward, or downeward, or round about, euery thing is a blocke in our way.

There is a difference betwixt deſire of aſſurance, & vnbeleefe, we

wee cannot be too carefull to raiſe vp to our ſelues arguments to ſettle our faith; although it ſhould be no faith, if it had no feet to ſtand vpon, but diſcurſiue; In matters of faith, if reaſons may be brought for the conuiction of the gaine-ſayers, it is well, if they be helps, they cannot be grounds of our beleefe: In the moſt faithfull heart there are ſome ſparks of infidelitie; ſo to beleeue, that wee ſhould haue no doubt at all, is ſcarſe incident into fleſh and blood: It is a great perfection, if we haue attained to ouercome our doubts. What did miſ-lead Zachary, but that, which vſes to guide others, Reaſon? (*I am old,*

and

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and my wife is of great age,) as if yeeres, and dry loynes could be any let to him, which is able of very ſtones to raiſe vp children vnto Abraham: Faith and reaſon haue their limits; where reaſon ends, faith begins; and if reaſon will bee encroching vpon the bounds of faith, ſhee is ſtraight taken captiue by infidelitie: We are not fit to follow Chriſt, if wee haue not denied our ſelues; and the cheefe peece of our ſelues is our reaſon: We muſt yeeld God able to do that, which we cannot comprehend, and we muſt comprehend that by our faith, which is diſclaimed by reaſon; Hagar muſt be driuen out of dores, that Sara may rule alone. The

The authoritie of the reporter, makes way for beleefe in things, which are otherwiſe hard to paſſe; although in the matters of God, we ſhould not ſo much care, who ſpeakes, as what is ſpoken, & from whom: The Angell tells his name, place, office, vnasked, that Zachary might not thinke any newes impoſſible, that was brought him by an heauenly meſſenger: Euen where there is no vſe of language, the ſpirits are diſtinguiſhed by names, and ech knowes his owne appellation, & others: He that gaue leaue vnto man his image, to giue names vnto all his viſible and inferior creatures, did himſelfe put names vnto the

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ſpirituall; and as their name is, ſo are they mighty and glorious: But leaſt Zachary ſhould no leſſe doubt of the ſtile of the meſſenger, then of the errand it ſelfe: He is at once both confirmed, and puniſhed with dumbneſſe: That tongne, which moued the doubt, muſt be tyed vp: He ſhall aske no more queſtions for forty weekes, becauſe he aſked this one diſtruſtfully.

Neither did Zachary looſe his tongue for the time, but his eares alſo, he was not onely mute, but deafe; For otherwiſe, when they came to aske his allowance for the name of his ſonne, they needed not to haue demanded it by ſignes, but by words: God will

will not passe ouer slight offences, and those which may plead the most colourable pretences in his best children, without a sensible checke: It is not our holy intireneſſe with God, that can beare vs out in the least sin; yea rather the more acquaintance we haue with his maiesty, the more sure wee are of correction, when wee offend: This may procure vs more fauour in our well-doing, not lesse iustice in euill.

Zachary staied, and the people waited; whether some longer discourse betwixt the Angell and him, then needed to bee recorded, or whether astonishment at the apparition & newes,

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with-held him, I inquire not; the multitude thought him long, yet though they could but ſee a farre off, they would not depart, till hee returned to bleſs them: Their patient attendance without, ſhames vs, that are hardly perſwaded to attend within, whiles both our ſenſes are imployed in our diuine ſeruices, and we are admitted to be coagents with our Miniſters.

At laſt Zachary comes out ſpeechles, and more amaſes them with his preſence, then with his delay: The eyes of the multitude, that were not worthy to ſee his viſion, yet ſee the ſignes of his viſion, that the world might be put into the expecta-

pectation of ſome extraordinary ſequell: God makes way for his voice, by ſilence; His ſpeech could not haue ſaid ſo much, as his dumbnes: Zachary would faine haue ſpoken, and could not; with vs too many are dumbe, and need not: Negligence, Feare, Partialitie ſtop the mouthes of many, which ſhall once ſay, Woe to me, becauſe I held my peace. His hand ſpeaks that, which he cannot with his tongue, and he makes them by ſignes to vndeſtand that, which they might read in his face; Thoſe powers we haue, we muſt vſe: But though he haue ceaſed to ſpeake, yet hee ceaſed not to miniſter; Hee takes not this

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dumbnes for a diſmiſſion, but ſtaies out the eight daies of his courſe, as one, that knew the eyes, and hands, and heart would be accepted of that God, which had bereaued him of his tongue: We may not ſtreight take occaſions of with-drawing our ſelues from the publique ſeruices of our God, much leſs vnder the Goſpell: The Law, which ſtood much vpon bodily perfection, diſpenſed with age for attendance: The Goſpell, which is all for the ſoule regards thoſe inward powers, which whiles they are vigorous, exclude all excuſes of our miniſtration.

The

The Annuntiation of CHRIST.

THE ſpirit of God was neuer ſo accurate in any deſcription, as that which concerns the incarnation of God: It was fit no circumſtance ſhould bee omitted in that ſtory, whereon the faith and ſaluation of all the world dependeth: Wee cannot ſo much as doubt of this truth, and be ſaued; no not the number of the month, not the name

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of the Angell is concealed: Euery particle imports not more certainty, then excellence: The time is the ſixth month after Iohns conception, the prime of the ſpring: Chriſt was conceiued in the ſpring, borne in the Solſtice: Hee, in whom the world receiued a new life, receiues life in the ſame ſeaſon, wherein the world receiued his firſt life from him; and he which ſtretches out the daies of his Church, and lengthens them to eternitie, appeares after all the ſhort and dimme light of the Law, and inlightens the world with his glory: The meſsenger is an Angell; A man was too meane to carry the newes of the con-

conception of God: Neuer any buſines was conceiued in heauen, that did ſo much concerne the earth, as the conception of the God of heauen in a wombe of earth: No leſſe then an Arch-Angell was worthy to beare this tidings, and neuer any Angell receiued a greater honor, then of this embaſſage.

It was fit our reparation ſhould anſwer our fall; an euill Angell was the firſt motioner of the one to Eue a Virgin, then eſpouſed to Adam in the garden of Eden: A good Angell is the firſt reporter of the other to Mary a Virgin eſpouſed to Ioſeph, in that place, which (as the garden of Galile, had a name from

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from flouriſhing: No good Angell could be the author of our reſtauration, as that euill Angell was of our ruine; But that, which thoſe glorious ſpirits could not doe themſelues, they are glad to report as done by the God of Spirits: Good newes reioyces the bearer; with what ioy did this holy Angell bring the newes of that Sauiour, in whom we are redeemed to life, himſelfe eſtabliſhed in life and glory? The firſt preacher of the Goſpell was an Angell; that office muſt needs be glorious, that deriues it ſelfe from ſuch a predeceſſor: God appointed his Angell to be the firſt preacher, and hath ſince called his Preachers

chers Angels: The meſſage is well ſuited; An Angell comes to a Virgin, Gabriel to Mary; He that was by ſignification the ſtrength of God, to her that was by ſignification exalted by God, to the conceiuing of him, that was the God of ſtrength: To a maide but eſpowſed; a maide for the honor of Virginitie, eſpouſed, for the honor of mariage: The mariage was in a ſort made, not conſummate, through the inſtinct of him, that ment to make her not an example, but a miracle of women: In this whole worke God would haue nothing ordinary; It was fit, that ſhee ſhould be a maried Virgin, which ſhould be

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be a Virgin-mother: Hee that ment to take mans nature without mans corruption, would be the ſonne of man without mans ſeed, would be the ſeede of the woman without man; and amongſt all women of a pure Virgin; but amongſt Virgins, of one eſpouſed, that there might be at once a witnes, and a guardian of her fruitfull Virginitie: If the ſame God had not bin the author of Virginity and Mariage, hee had neuer countenanced Virginitie by mariage.

Whither doth this glorious Angell come to finde the mother of him, that was God, but to obſcure Galile? A part, which

euen

euen the Iewes themſelues deſpiſed, as forſaken of their priuiledges, (*Out of Galile ariſeth no Prophet*). Behold an Angell comes to that Galile, out of which no Prophet comes, and the God of Prophets and Angels deſcends to be conceiued in that Galile, out of which no Prophet ariſeth: He that filleth all places, makes no difference of places; It is the perſon, which giues honor and priuiledge to the place, not the place to the perſon; as the preſence of God makes the heauen, the heauen doth not make the owner glorious: No blinde corner of Nazareth can hide the bleſſed Virgin from the Angell; The fauors of God will

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will finde out his children, whereſoeuer they are withdrawne.

It is the faſhion of God to ſeeke out the moſt deſpiſed, on whom to beſtow his honors, we cannot runne away as from the iudgments, ſo not from the mercies of our God: The cottages of Galile are preferred by God to the famous pallaces of Ieruſalem, he cares not how homely hee conuerſe with his owne: Why ſhould we be tranſported with the outward glory of places, whiles our God regards it not? We are not of the Angels dyet, if wee had not rather bee with the bleſſed Virgin at Nazareth, then with the proud dames in

in the Court of Ieruſalem: It is a great vanity to reſpect any thing aboue goodnes, and to diſ-eſteeme goodnes for any want. The Angell ſalutes the Virgin, he prayes not to her; He ſalutes her as a Saint, he prayes not to her as a Goddeſs: For vs to ſalute her, as hee did, were groſſe preſumption; For neither are we, as he was, neither is ſhee, as ſhee was: If hee that was a ſpirit ſaluted her, that was fleſh and blood here on earth, it is not for vs, that are fleſh and blood to ſalute her, which is a glorious ſpirit in heauen: For vs, to pray to her in the Angels ſalutation, were to abuſe the Virgin, the Angell, the ſalutation.

But

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But how gladly doe wee ſecond the Angell in the praiſe of her, which was more ours, then his? How iuſtly doe we bleſſe her, whom the Angell pronounceth bleſſed? How worthily is ſhee honoured of men, whom the Angell proclaimeth beloued of God? O bleſſed MARY, he cannot bleſſe thee, he cannot honor thee too much, that deifies thee not: That which the Angell ſaid of thee, thou haſt propheſied of thy ſelfe, we beleeue the Angell, and thee: All generations ſhall call thee bleſſed, by the fruit of whoſe womb all generations are bleſſed: If Zachary were amaſed with the ſight of this Angell, much more the

the Virgin: That very ſexe hath more diſaduantage of feare: If it had bin but a man, that had come to her in that ſecrecy and ſuddennes, ſhee could not but haue bin troubled; how much more, when the ſhining glory of the perſon doubled the aſtoniſhment.

The troubles of holy mindes end euer in comfort: Ioy was the errand of the Angell, and not terror. Feare (as all paſſions) diſquiets the heart, and makes it for the time vnfit to receiue the meſsages of God: Soone hath the Angell cleared theſe troubleſome miſts of paſſions, and ſent out the beames of heauenly conſolation into the remoteſt cor-

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ner of her ſoule by the glad newes of her Sauiour: How can ioy, but enter into her heart, out of whoſe womb ſhall come ſaluation? what roome can feare finde in that breſt, that is aſsured of fauour? *Feare not Mary; for thou haſt found fauour with God*: Let thoſe feare, who know they are in diſpleaſure, or know not they are gracious: Thine happy eſtate calls for confidence, and that confidence for ioy: What ſhould, what can they feare, who are fauoured of him, at whom the Diuels tremble? Not the preſence of the good Angels, but the temptations of the euill ſtrike many terrors into our weaknes; wee could

could not bee dismaied with them, if we did not forget our condition: Wee haue not receiued the spirit of bondage to feare againe, but the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry *Abba Father*: If that spirit (O God) witnesse with our spirits, that wee are thine, how can we feare any of those spirituall wickednesses? Giue vs assurance of thy fauor, and let the powers of Hell doe their worst.

It was no ordinary fauour, that the Virgin found in heauen: No mortall creature was euer thus graced, that he should take part of her nature, that was the God of nature; that hee, which made all things, should make his

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humane body of hers; that her wombe ſhould yeeld that fleſh, which was perſonally vnited to the Godhead; that ſhee ſhould beare him, that vpholds the world: *Lo, thou ſhalt conceiue and beare a Sonne, and ſhalt call his name Ieſus.* It is a queſtion, whether there bee more wonder in the conception, or in the fruit; the conception of the Virgin, or Ieſus conceiued: Both are maruelous, but the former doth not more exceed all other wonders, then the latter exceedeth it. For the childe of a Virgin is the reimprouement of that power, which created the world: but that God ſhould be incarnate of a Virgin, was an abaſement of his

his maiestie, and an exaltation of the creature beyond all example. Well was that childe worthy to make the mother blessed: Here was a double conception; one in the wombe of her body, the other of the soule: If that were more miraculous, this was more beneficiall; That was her priuiledge, this was her happinesse: If that were singular to her, this is common to all his chosen: There is no renewed heart, wherein thou, O Sauiour, art not formed againe. Blessed be thou, that hast herein made vs blessed. For what wombe can conceiue thee, and not partake of thee? Who can partake of thee, and not be happy?

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Doubtleſſe the Virgin vnderſtood the Angell, as he ment, of a preſent conception, which made her ſo much more inquiſitiue into the manner & meanes of this euent: *How ſhall this be, ſince I know not a man?* That ſhee ſhould conceiue a ſonne by the knowledge of man after her mariage conſummate, could haue bin no wonder: But how then ſhould that ſonne of hers be the ſonne of God? This demand was higher, how her preſent virginitie ſhould bee inſtantly fruitfull, might be well worthy of admiration, of inquiry: Here was deſire of information, not doubts of infidelitie; yea rather this queſtion argues faith: It takes

takes for granted, that, which an vnbeleeuing heart would haue ſtucke at: Shee ſaies not, who and whence art thou? what kingdom is this, where, & when ſhall it be erected? But ſmoothly ſuppoſing all thoſe ſtrange things would be done, ſhee inſiſts onely in that, which did neceſſarily require a further intimation, and doth not diſtruſt, but demand: Neither doth ſhee ſay, this cannot be, nor how can this be; but how ſhall this be? ſo doth the Angell anſwer, as one, that knew he needed not to ſatisfie curioſitie, but to informe iudgment, and vphold faith: He doth not therefore tell her of the manner, but of the author of

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this act; *The Holy Ghoſt ſhall come vpon thee, and the power of the moſt High ſhall ouerſhadow thee:* It is enough to know, who is the vndertaker, and what he will doe: O God, what doe wee ſeeke a cleare light, where thou wilt haue a ſhadow? No mother knowes the manner of her naturall conception; what preſumption ſhall it bee for fleſh and blood, to ſearch how the ſonne of God tooke fleſh and blood of his creature? It is for none, but the Almighty to know thoſe works, which he doth immediately concerning himſelfe; thoſe that concerne vs, he hath reuealed: Secrets to God, things reuealed to vs.

This

This answer was not so full, but that a thousand difficulties might arise out of the particularities of so strange a message, yet after the Angels solution, wee heare of no more obiections, no more interrogations: The faithfull heart, when it once vnderstands the good pleasure of God, argues no more, but sweetly rests it selfe in a quiet expectation; *Behold the seruant of the Lord, be it to me according to thy word.* There is not a more noble proofe of our faith, then to captiuate all the powers of our vnderstanding and will to our Creator, and without all scisitations to goe blindfold, whither hee will lead vs: All disputations with God

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God (after his will knowne) ariſe from infidelitie: Great is the myſterie of godlines, and if we will giue nature leaue to cauill, wee cannot be Chriſtians. O God, thou art faithfull, thou art powerfull: It is enough, that thou haſt ſaid it; In the humilitie of our obedience we reſigne our ſelues ouer to thee: Behold the ſeruants of the Lord, bee it vnto vs, according to thy word.

How fit was her wombe to conceiue the fleſh of the ſonne of God by the power of the ſpirit of God, whoſe breſt had ſo ſoone by the power of the ſame ſpirit conceiued an aſſent to the will of God; and now of an hand-

handmaid of God, ſhe is aduanced to the mother of God: No ſooner hath ſhee ſaid (*be it done*) then it is done, the Holy Ghoſt ouer-ſhadowes her, and formes her Sauiour in her owne body. This very Angell, that talkes with the bleſſed Virgin could ſcarſe haue bin able to expreſſe the ioy of her heart in the ſenſe of this diuine burden: Neuer any mortall creature had ſo much cauſe of exultation: How could ſhee, that was full of God be other then full of ioy in that God? Greefe growes greater by concealing; Ioy by expreſſion: The holy Virgin had vnderſtood by the Angell, how her cozen Elizabeth was no leſſe of kin

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kin to her in condition; the fruitfulneſſe of whoſe age did ſomewhat ſuite the fruitfulnes of her virginitie: Happineſſe communicated doubles it ſelfe; Here is no ſtrayning of curteſie; The bleſsed maide, whom vigor of age had more fitted for the way, haſtens her iourney into the hill-country to viſit that gracious Matron, whom God had made a ſigne of her miraculous conception: Only the meeting of Saints in heauen can parallell the meeting of theſe two Coſins: The two wonders of the world are met vnder one rooſe, and congratulate their mutuall happines: When wee haue Chriſt ſpiritually conceiued

ued in vs, we cannot be quiet, till we haue imparted our ioy: Elizabeth that holy Matron did no ſooner welcome her bleſsed Cozen, then her babe welcomes his Sauiour; Both in the retired cloſets of their mothers wombe are ſenſible of ech others preſence; the one by his omniſcience, the other by inſtinct: He did not more fore-runne Chriſt, then ouer-runne nature: How ſhould our hearts leap within vs, when the ſon of God vouchſafes to come into the ſecret of our ſoules, not to viſit vs, but to dwell with vs, to dwell in vs.

The

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The birth of Christ.

AS all the actions of men, ſo eſpecially the publike actions of publike men are ordered by God to other ends then their owne: This Edict went not ſo much out from Auguſtus, as from the court of heauen. What did Cæſar know Ioſeph and Mary? His charge was vniuerſall to a world of ſubiects, through all the Roman Empire: God intended this Cenſion onely for the

the bleſsed Virgin and her ſon, that Chriſt might bee borne, where he ſhould: Cæſar ment to fill his cofers, God ment to fulfill his propheſies, and ſo to fulfill them, that thoſe, whom it concerned might not feele the accompliſhment: If God had directly commanded the Virgin to goe vp to Bethleem, ſhee had ſeene the intention, & expected the iſſue; but that wiſe moderator of all things, that works his will in vs, loues ſo to doe it, as may be leaſt with our fore-ſight, and acquaintance, and would haue vs fall vnder his decrees vnawares, that we may ſo much the more adore the depths of his prouidence: Euery creature walks

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walks blindfold, onely he that dwells in light, ſees whither they goe.

Doubtles, bleſſed Mary ment to haue bin deliuered of her diuine burden at home, and litle thought of changing the place of conception for another of her birth: That houſe was honored by the Angell, yea by the ouer-ſhadowing of the Holy Ghoſt, none could equally ſatisfie her hopes, or deſires: it was fit, that hee, which made choice of the wombe, wherein his ſonne ſhould be conceiued, ſhould make choice of the place, where his ſon ſhould be borne: As the worke is all his, ſo will hee alone contriue all the cir-

cum-

cumſtances to his owne ends: O the infinite wiſdom of God in caſting all his deſignes! There needs no other proofe of Chriſt, then Cæſar & Bethleem, and of Cæſars, then Auguſtus; his gouernment, his Edict pleads the truth of the Meſſias: His gouernment, now was the deep peace of all the world vnder that quiet ſcepter, which made way for him, who was the Prince of peace: If warres be a ſigne of the time of his ſecond comming, peace was a ſigne of his firſt: His Edict, now was the ſcepter departed from IVDA: It was the time for Shilo to come; No power was left in the Iewes, but to obey: Auguſtus

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is the Emperor of the world, vnder him Herod is the King of Iudea; Cyrenius is president of Syria; Iurie hath nothing of her owne. For Herod, if he were a King, yet he was no Iew, and if he had bin a Iew, yet he was no otherwise a King, then tributary and titular: The Edict came out from Augustus, was executed by Cyrenius; Herod is no actor in this seruice: Gaine and glory are the ends of this taxation, each man profest himselfe a subiect, and payed for the priuiledge of his seruitude: Now their very heads were not their owne, but must be payed for to the head of a forreine State: They which before stood vpon the

the termes of their immunitie, ſtoope at the laſt: The proud ſuggeſtions of Iudas the Galilean might ſhed their blood, and ſwell their ſtomacks, but could not eaſe their yoke, neither was it the meaning of God, that holineſſe (if they had bin as they pretended) ſhould ſhelter them from ſubiection: A tribute is impoſed vpon Gods free people: This act of bondage brings them liberty: Now when they ſeemed moſt neglected of God, they are bleſſed with a Redeemer; when they are moſt preſſed with forreine ſoueraintie, God ſends them a King of their owne, to whom Cæſar himſelf muſt be a ſubiect:

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The goodnes of our God picks out the moſt needfull times for our releefe, and comfort: Our extremities giue him the moſt glory.

Whither muſt Ioſeph & Mary come to be taxed, but vnto Bethleem Dauids Citie? The very place proues their deſcent: He that ſucceeded Dauid in his throne, muſt ſucceed him in the place of his birth: So cleerely was Bethleem deſigned to this honor by the Prophets, that euen the Preiſts and the Scribes could point Herod vnto it, and aſſure him, the King of the Iewes could bee no where elſe borne. Bethleem iuſtly the houſe of bread, the bread that came

downe

downe from heauen is there giuen to the world; whence ſhould we haue the bread of life, but from the houſe of bread? O holy Dauid, was this the well of Bethleem, whereof thou didſt ſo thirſt to drinke of old, when thou ſaidſt; *O that one would giue me drinke of the water of the well of Bethleem!* Surely that other water, when it was brought thee by thy Worthies, thou powredſt it on the ground, and wouldſt not drinke of it: This was that liuing water, for which thy ſoule longed, whereof thou ſaidſt elſewhere; *As the heart brayeth after the water brookes, ſo longeth my ſoule after thee O God: My ſoule thirſteth for God, for the liuing God.*

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It was no leſſe then foure daies iourney from Nazareth to Bethleem: How iuſt an excuſe might the bleſſed Virgin haue pleaded for her abſence? What woman did euer vndertake ſuch a iourney ſo neere her deliuery? and doubtles Ioſeph, which was now taught of God to loue and honor her, was loth to draw forth a deere wife in ſo vnweldy a caſe, into ſo manifeſt hazard: But the charge was peremptory, the obedience exemplary; Their deſire of an inoffenſiue obſeruance euen of heatheniſh authoritie, digeſts all difficulties: We may not take eaſie occaſions to withdraw our obedience vnto ſupreme commands; yea how

didſt thou (O Sauiour) by whom Auguſtus raigned, in the womb of thy mother yeeld this homage to Auguſtus: The firſt leſſon, that euer thy example taught vs, was obedience.

After many ſteps are Ioſeph and Mary come to Bethleem: The plight, wherein ſhee was, would not allow any ſpeed, and the forced leiſure of the ionrney cauſeth diſappointment: the end was worſe then the way; there was no reſt in the way, there was no roome in the Inne: It could not be, but that there were many of the kinred of Ioſeph & Mary at that time in Bethleem: For both there were their aunceſtors borne, if not themſelues; and

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thither came vp all the cosens of their blood: yet there and then doth the holy Virgin want roome to lay either her head, or her burthen. If the house of Dauid had not lost all mercy and good nature, a daughter of Dauid could not so neere the time of her trauell, haue bin destitute of lodging in the Citie of Dauid. Litle did the Bethleemites think, what a guest they refused. Else they would gladly haue opened their dores to him, which was able to open the gates of heauen to them. Now their inhospitalitie is punishment enough to it selfe: They haue lost the honor and happinesse of being host to their God: Euen still, O blessed Sauiour,

Sauiour, thou ſtandeſt at our dores and knockeſt; Euery motion of thy good ſpirit tells vs, thou art there: Now thou commeſt in thy owne name, and there thou ſtandeſt, whiles thy head is full of the deaw, and thy locks wet with the drops of the night: If wee ſuffer carnall deſires, and worldly thoughts to take vp the lodgings of our heart, and reuell within vs, whiles thou waiteſt vpon our admiſſion, ſurely our iudgment ſhall be ſo much the greater, by how much better wee know, whom we haue excluded? What do we cry ſhame on the Bethleemites, whileſt wee are wilfully more churliſh, more vnthankfull? There

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There is no roome in my heart for the wonder at this humilitie: He, for whom heauen is too ſtrait, whom the heauen of heauens cannot containe, lies in the ſtrait cabbin of the wombe, and when hee would inlarge himſelfe for the world, is not allowed the roome of an Inne: The many manſions of heauen were at his diſpoſing, the earth was his, and the fullnes of it, yet he ſuffers himſelfe to bee refuſed of a baſe cottage, and complaineth not: What meaſure ſhould diſcontent vs wretched men, when thou (O God) fareſt thus from thy creatures? How ſhould we learne both to want and abound, from thee, which

which abounding with the glory and riches of heauen, wouldst want a lodging in thy first welcome to the earth? Thou camest to thy own, & thy own receiued thee not: How can it trouble vs to be reiected of the world, wch is not ours? What wonder is it, if thy seruants wandred abroad in sheeps skins, and goats skins, destitute & afflicted, when their Lord is denied harbour? How should all the world blush at this indignitie of Bethleem? He that came to saue men, is sent for his first lodging to the beasts: The stable is become his Inne, the cratch his bed: O strange cradle of that great King, which heauen it selfe may enuie! O Sauiour,

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uiour, thou that wert both the maker and owner of heauen, of earth, couldst haue made thee a pallace without hands, couldst haue commanded thee an empty roóm in thoſe houſes, which thy creatures had made? When thou didſt but bid the Angels auoide their firſt place, they fell downe from heauen like lightning; and when in thine humbled eſtate thou didſt but ſay, *I am he*, who was able to ſtand before thee? How eaſie had it bin for thee to haue made place for thy ſelfe in the throngs of the ſtatelieſt Courts? Why wouldſt thou be thus homely, but that by cõtemning worldly glories thou mightſt teach vs to con-

contemne them? that thou mightſt ſanctifie pouerty to them, whom thou calleſt vnto want? that ſince thou, which hadſt the choice of all earthly conditions, wouldſt be borne poore and deſpiſed, thoſe, which muſt want out of neceſſitie, might not thinke their pouerty greeuous.

Here was neither frend to entertaine, nor ſeruant to attend, nor place wherein to be attended, onely the poore beaſts gaue way to the God of all the world: It is the great myſterie of godlineſſe, that God was manifeſted in the fleſh, and ſeene of Angels, but here, which was the top of all wonders, the very beaſts might

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might ſee their maker: For thoſe ſpirits to ſee God in the fleſh, it was not ſo ſtrange, as for the brute creatures to ſee him, which was the God of ſpirits: He, that would be led into the wildernes amongſt wilde beaſts to be tempted, would come into the houſe of beaſts to be borne, that from the height of his diuine glory his humiliation might bee the greater: How can we be abaſed low enough for thee (O Sauiour) that haſt thus neglected thy ſelfe for vs?

That the viſitation might be anſwerable to the homelineſſe of the place, attendants, prouiſion, who ſhall come to congratulate his birth, but poore ſhepherds?

herds? The Kings of the earth reſt at home, and haue no ſummons to attend him, by whom they raigne: God hath choſen the weake things of the world to confound the mighty: In an obſcure time (the night) vnto obſcure men (ſhepherds) doth God manifeſt the light of his Sonne, by glorious Angels: It is not our meanneſſe (O God) that can exclude vs from the beſt of thy mercies; yea thus far doſt thou reſpect perſons, that thou haſt put downe the mighty, and exalted them of low degree.

If theſe ſhepherds had beene ſnorting in their beds, they had no more ſeene Angels, nor heard

newes

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newes of their Sauiour, then their neighbours; Their vigilancie is honored with this heauenly vision: Thoſe which are induſtrious in any calling, are capable of further bleſſings, whereas the idle are fit for nothing but temptation. No leſſe then a whole Chore of Angels are worthy to ſing the hymne, of *Glory to God* for the incarnation of his Sonne: What ioy is enough for vs, whoſe nature he tooke, and whom he came to reſtore by his incarnation? If we had the tongues of Angels, wee could not raiſe this note high enough to the praiſe of our glorious Redeemer.

No ſooner do the ſhepherds heare

heare the newes of a Sauionr, then they runne to Bethleem to ſeeke him: Thoſe, that left their beds to tend their flocks, leaue their flocks to inquire after their Sauiour: No earthly thing is too deere to bee forſaken for Chriſt: If we ſuffer any worldly occaſion to ſtay vs from Bethleem, wee care more for our ſheepe, then our ſoules: It is not poſſible, that a faithfull heart ſhould heare where Chriſt is, & not labour to the ſight, to the fruition of him. Where art thou (O Sauiour) but at home in thine owne houſe, in the aſſembly of thy Saints? Where art thou to be found, but in thy word and ſacraments? yea there

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thou ſeekeſt for vs, if there wee haſte not to ſeeke for thee, wee are worthy to want thee, worthy that our want of thee here, ſhould make vs want the preſence of thy face for euer.

The

The SAGES *and the* STARRE.

THE ſhepherdes and the cratch accorded well; yet euen they ſaw nothing, which they might not cõtemne; neither was there any of thoſe ſhepherds that ſeemed not more like a King, then that King, whom they came to ſee. But oh the diuine maieſtie, that ſhined in this baſeneſſe! There lies the babe in the ſtable, crying in the manger, whom the An-

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gels came downe from heauen to proclaime, whom the Sages come from the East to adore, whom an heauenly starre notifies to the world, that now men might see, that heauen & earth serues him, that neglected himselfe. Those lights, that hang low are not farre seene, but those which are high placed are equally seene in the remotest distances. Thy light, O Sauiour, was no lesse then heauenly: The East saw that, which Bethleem might haue seene: Oft-times those, which are neerest in place, are fartheſt off in affection: Large obiects, when they are too close to the eye, doe so ouer-fill the sense, that they are not discerned.

What

What a ſhame is this to Bethleem? The Sages came out of the Eaſt to worſhip him, whom that village refuſed: The Bethleemites were Iewes; The wiſemen Gentiles: This firſt entertainment of Chriſt was a preſage of the ſequell; The Gentiles ſhall come from far to adore Chriſt, whiles the Iewes reiect him.

Thoſe Eaſterlings were great ſearchers of the depths of nature, profeſſed Philoſophers, them hath God ſingled out to the honor of the manifeſtation of Chriſt: Humane learning well improued makes vs capable of diuine: There is no knowledge, whereof God is not the author; he would neuer haue beſtowed

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any gift, that ſhould lead vs away from himſelfe; It is an ignorant conceit, that inquiry into nature ſhould make men Atheous: No man is ſo apt to ſee the ſtarre of Chriſt, as a diligent diſciple of Philoſophie: Doubtleſſe this light was viſible vnto more, onely they followed it, which knew it had more then nature: He is truely wiſe, that is wiſe for his owne ſoule: If theſe wiſe men had beene acquainted with all the other ſtarres of heauen, and had not ſeene the ſtarre of Chriſt, they had had but light enough to lead them into vtter darkneſſe: Philoſophy without the ſtarre is but the wiſpe of error.

Theſe

Theſe Sages were in a meane betweene the Angels and the ſhepherds: God would in all the ranks of intelligent creatures haue ſome to be witneſſes of his Sonne: The Angels direct the ſhepherds, the ſtarre guides the Sages; the duller capacitie hath the more cleare and powerfull helps: The wiſdome of our good GOD proportions the meanes vnto the diſpoſition of the perſons: Their Aſtronomy had taught them this ſtarre was not ordinary, whether in ſite, or in brightnes, or in motion? The eyes of nature might well ſee, that ſome ſtrange newes was portended to the world by it: But that this ſtarre deſigned the

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birth of the Meſſias, there needed yet another light: If the ſtarre had not beſides had the commentarie of a reuelation from God, it could haue led the wiſemen onely into a fruitleſſe wonder: Giue them to bee the offſpring of Balaam, yet the true prediction of that falſe Prophet was not enough warrant: If he told them the Meſſiah ſhould ariſe, as a ſtarre out of Iacob, he did not tell them, that a ſtarre ſhould ariſe far from the poſteritie of Iacob, at the birth of the Meſſiah: He that did put that propheſie into the mouth of Balaam, did alſo put this illumination into the heart of the Sages: The ſpirit of God is free to breath

breath where he liſteth: Many ſhall come from the Eaſt and the Weſt to ſeeke Chriſt, when the children of the kingdome ſhall be ſhut out: Euen then God did not ſo confine his election to the pale of the Church, as that he did not ſometimes looke out for ſpeciall inſtruments of his glory.

Whither do theſe Sages come, but to Ieruſalem? where ſhould they hope to heare of the new King, but in the mother Citie of the kingdom? The conduct of the ſtarre was firſt only generall to Iudea; the reſt is for a time left to inquiry: They were not brought thither for their owne ſakes, but for Iuries, for the worlds;

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worlds; that they might helpe to make the Iewes inexcuſable, and the world faithfull: That their tongues therefore might blaſon the birth of Chriſt, they are brought to the head Citie of Iudea, to report, & inquire: Their wiſdome could not teach them to imagine, that a King could be borne to Iudea, of that note and magnificence, that a ſtarre from heauen ſhould publiſh him to the earth, and that his ſubiects ſhould not know it: and therefore as preſuppoſing a common notice, they ſay, *Where is he, that is borne King of the Iewes?* There is much deceit in probabilities, eſpecially when we meddle with ſpirituall matters. For God

God vſes ſtill to goe a way by himſelfe.

If we iudge according to reaſon and appearance, who is ſo likely to vnderſtand heauenly truths, as the profound Doctors of the world? theſe God paſſeth ouer, and reueales his will to babes: Had theſe Sages met with the ſhepherds of the villages neere Bethleem, they had receiued that intelligence of Chriſt which they did vainely ſeeke from the learned Scribes of Hieruſalem: The greateſt Clarks are not alwaies the wiſeſt in the affaires of God; theſe things go not by diſcourſe, but by reuelation.

No ſooner hath the ſtarre brought

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brought them within the noiſe of Ieruſalem, then it is vaniſhed out of ſight: God would haue their eyes lead them ſo farre, as till their tongues might bee ſet on worke to winne the vocall atteſtation of the cheife Preiſts, and Scribes to the fore-appointed place of our Sauiours natiuitie: If the ſtarre had caried them directly to Bethleem, the learned Iewes had neuer ſearched the truth of thoſe propheſies, wherewith they are ſince iuſtly convinced: God neuer withdrawes our helps, but for a further aduantage: Howſoeuer our hopes ſeeme croſſed, where his name may gaine, we cannot complaine of loſſe.

Litle

Litle did the Sages thinke, this queſtion would haue troubled Herod; they had (I feare) concealed their meſſage, if they had ſuſpected this euent: Sure, they thought it might be ſome ſon, or grandchild of him, which then held the throne, ſo as this might winne fauour from Herod, rather then an vnwelcome feare of riualitie. Doubtleſſe they went firſt to the Court; where elſe ſhould they aske for a King? The more pleaſing this newes had bin, if it had falne vpon Herods owne loines, the more greeuous it was to light vpon a ſtranger: If Herod had not ouer-much affected greatneſſe, he had not vpon thoſe indirect

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direct termes aſpired to the crowne of Iewry; ſo much the more therefore did it trouble him to heare the rumor of a ſucceſſor, and that not of his owne. Setled greatneſſe cannot abide either change, or partnerſhip: If any of his ſubiects had moued this queſtion, I feare, his head had anſwered it. It is well, that the name of forreyners could excuſe theſe Sages: Herod could not be brought vp among the Iewes, and not haue heard many and confident reports of a Meſſias, that ſhould ere long ariſe out of Iſrael; and now when hee heares the fame of a King borne, whom a ſtarre from heauen ſignifies and attends; hee is

netled with the newes: Euery thing affrights the guilty: Vſurpation is full of iealouſies, and feare no leſſe full of proiects, and imaginations; it makes vs think euery buſh a man, and euery man a theefe.

Why art thou troubled (O Herod)? A King is borne, but ſuch a King, as whoſe ſcepter may euer concurre with lawfull ſoueraignty; yea ſuch a King, as by whom Kings doe hold their ſcepters, not looſe them: If the wiſe men tell thee of a King, the ſtarre tells thee, he is heauenly: Here is good cauſe of ſecuritie, none of feare: The moſt generall enmities and oppoſitions to good ariſe from miſtakings; If men

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men could but know, how much ſafety and ſweetnes there is in all diuine truth, it could receiue nothing from them but welcomes & gratulations: Miſconceits haue bin ſtill guilty of all wrongs, and perſecutions. But if Herod were troubled (as Tyrannie is ſtill ſuſpicious) why was all Ieruſalem troubled with him? Ieruſalem, which now might hope for a relaxation of her bonds, for a recouery of her liberty, and right? Ieruſalem, which now onely had cauſe to lift vp her drouping head in the ioy and happineſſe of a redeemer? yet not Herods Court, but euen Ieruſalem was troubled; ſo had this miſerable Citie beene

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ouer-toyled with change, that now they were ſetled in a condition quietly euill, they are troubled with the newes of better: They had now got an habit of ſeruilitie, and now they are ſo acquainted with the yoke, that the very noiſe of liberty, (which they ſuppoſed would not come with eaſe) began to be vnwelcome.

To turne the cauſes of ioy into ſorrow argues extreame deiectednes, and a diſtemper of iudgment no leſſe then deſperate: Feare puts on a viſor of deuotion; Herod calls his learned Councell, and as not doubting, whether the Meſſiah ſhould be borne, he askes, where he ſhall

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be borne? In the diſparition of that other light, there is a perpetually fixed ſtarre, ſhining in the writings of the Prophets, that guides the cheefe Preiſts & Scribes directly vnto Bethleem: As yet enuie, and preiudice had not blinded the eyes, and peruerted the hearts of the Iewiſh teachers; ſo as now, they clearely iuſtifie that Chriſt, whom they afterwards condemne, and by thus iuſtifying him condemne themſelues in reiecting him: The water, that is vntroubled yeelds the viſage perfectly: If God had no more witneſſe, but from his enemies, wee haue ground enough of our faith.

Herod feared, but diſſembled his

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his feare, as thinking it a ſhame, that ſtrangers ſhould ſee, there could any power ariſe vnder him, worthy of his reſpect or awe: Out of an vnwillingnes therefore to diſcouer the impotency of his paſſion, hee makes litle adoe of the matter, but onely, after a priuy inquiſition into the time, imploies the informers in the ſearch of the perſon; *Goe, and ſearch diligently for the babe &c.* It was no great iourney from Ieruſalem to Bethleem, how eaſily might Herods cruelty haue ſecretly ſuborned ſome of his bloody Courtiers to this enquiry, and execution? If God had not ment to mocke him, before hee found himſelfe mocked of

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the wiſe-men, he had rather ſent before their iourney, then after their diſappointment: But that God, in whoſe hands all hearts are, did purpoſely beſot him, that he might not finde the way to ſo horrible a miſcheefe.

There is no villany ſo great, but it will maske it ſelfe vnder a ſhow of piety: Herod will alſo worſhip the babe; The curteſie of a falſe Tyrant is death; A crafty hypocrite neuer meanes ſo ill, as when he ſpeaks faireſt: The wiſe-men are vpon their way, full of expectation, full of deſire; I ſee no man either of the Citie, or Court to accompanie them; Whether diſtruſt, or feare hindred them, I inquire not,

not, but of ſo many thouſand Iewes, no one ſtirres his foote to ſee that King of theirs, which ſtrangers came ſo farre to viſit: yet were not theſe reſolute Sages diſcouraged with this ſolitarineſſe, and ſmall reſpect, nor drawne to repent of their iourney, as thinking, What doe we come ſo farre to honor a King, whom no man will acknowledge? What meane we to trauell ſo many hundred miles to ſee that, which the inhabitants will not looke out to behold? but cheerfully renew their iourney to that place, which the ancient light of propheſie had deſigned; And now behold, God incourages their holy forward-

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neſſe from heauen, by ſending them their firſt guide, as if hee had ſaid, What neede yee care for the neglect of men, when yee ſee heauen honors the King, whom yee ſeeke? What ioy theſe Sages conceiued, when their eyes firſt beheld the re-appearance of that happy ſtarre, they onely can tell, that after a long and ſad night of tentation, haue ſeene the louing countenance of God ſhining forth vpon their ſoules: If with obedience and courage wee can follow the calling of God, in difficult enterpriſes, we ſhall not want ſupplies of comfort. Let not vs be wanting to God, we ſhall be ſure, he cannot be wanting to vs.

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He that led Iſrael by a pillar of fire into the land of promiſe, leads the wiſe-men by a ſtarre, to the promiſed ſeede: All his directions partake of that light, which is in him; For God is light: This ſtarre moues both ſlowly and low, as might be fittest for the pace, for the purpoſe of theſe pilgrims: It is the goodnes of God, that in thoſe meanes wherein we cannot reach him, hee deſcends vnto vs. Surely when the wiſe-men ſaw the ſtar firſt ſtand ſtill, they looked about to ſee, what Pallace there might be neere vnto that ſtation, fit for the birth of a King, neither could they thinke that ſory ſhedde was it, which the

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ſtarre ment to point out; but finding their guide ſetled ouer that baſe roofe, they go in to ſee, what gueſt it held. They enter, and, O God, what a King doe they finde! how poore? how contemptible? wrapt in clowts, laid in ſtraw, cradled in the manger, attended with beaſts! what a ſight was this, after all the glorious promiſes of that ſtarre, after the predictions of Prophets, after the magnificence of their expectation?

All their way afforded nothing ſo deſpicable, as that babe, whom they came to worſhip: But as thoſe, which could not haue bin wiſe-men, vnleſſe they had knowne, that the greateſt glories

glories haue ariſen from meane beginnings, they fall downe, and worſhip that hidden maieſtie: This baſeneſſe hath bred wonder in them, not contempt; they well knew, the ſtarre could not lye: They, which ſaw his ſtarre a farre off in the Eaſt, when he lay ſwadled in Bethleem, do alſo ſee his royalty further of, in the deſpiſed eſtate of his infancy: A royalty more then humane: They well knew, that ſtarres did not vſe to attend earthly Kings; and if their ayme had not bin higher, what was a Iewiſh King to Perſian ſtrangers? anſwerable therefore hereunto was their adoration. Neither did they lift vp empty hands to him, whom they

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they worshipt, but presented him with the most precious commodities of their country, *Gold, Incense, Myrrh*; not as thinking to enrich him with these, but by way of homage acknowledging him the Lord of these: If these Sages had bin Kings, and had offred a princely weight of gold, the blessed Virgin had not needed in her purification to haue offred two yong pigeons, as the signe of her penury: As God loues not empty hands, so he measures fulnes by the affection: Let it be Gold, or Incense, or Myrrhe, that we offer him, it cannot but please him, who doth not vse to aske, how much, but how good.

The

The PVRIFICATION.

THere could be no impuritie in the ſon of God, and if the beſt ſubſtance of a pure Virgin caried in it any taint of Adam, that was ſcowred away by ſanctification in the womb, and yet the Sonne would be circumciſed, and the mother purified: He that came to be ſinne for vs, would in our perſons be legally vncleane, that by ſatisfying the law, he might take away our

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our vncleanneſſe: Though hee were exempted from the common condition of our birth, yet he would not deliuer himſelfe from thoſe ordinary rites, that implied the weaknes, and blemiſhes of humanitie: Hee would fullfill one law to abrogate it, another to ſatisfie it; Hee that was aboue the law, would come vnder the Law, to free vs from the Law: Not a day would be changed, either in the circumciſion of CHRIST, or the purification of MARY. Here was neither conuenience of place, nor of neceſſaries for ſo painfull a worke, in the ſtable of Bethleem, yet he that made, and gaue the Law, will rather keep it with

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difficultie, then tranſgreſſe it with eaſe.

Why wouldeſt thou, O bleſſed Sauiour, ſuffer that ſacred foreskin to be cut off, but that by the power of thy circumciſion, the ſame might bee done to our ſoules, that was done to thy body? wee cannot bee therefore thine, if our hearts bee vncircumciſed: Do thou that in vs, which was done to thee for vs; cut off the ſuperfluitie of our maliciouſneſſe, that we may be holy in, and by thee, which for vs wert content to bee legally impure.

There was ſhame in thy birth, there was paine in thy circumciſion; After a contemptible wel-

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welcome into the world, that a ſharp raſor ſhould paſſe through thy skin for our ſakes, (which can hardly endure to bleed for our owne) it was the praiſe of thy wonderfull mercy, in ſo early humiliation: What paine, or contempt ſhould we refuſe for thee, that haſt made no ſpare of thy ſelfe for vs? Now is Bethleem left with too much honor, there is Chriſt borne, adored, circumciſed: No ſooner is the bleſſed Virgin either able, or allowed to walke, then ſhe trauels to Ieruſalem, to performe her holy rites for her ſelfe, for her ſonne; to purifie her-ſelfe, to preſent her ſonne: She goes not to her owne houſe at Nazareth,

ſhee

ſhee goes to Gods houſe at Hieruſalem: If purifying were a ſhadow, yet thankſgiuing is a ſubſtance; Thoſe whom God hath bleſſed with fruit of body, and ſafety of deliuerance, if they make not their firſt iourney to the Temple of God, they partake more of the vnthankfulnes of Eue, then Maries deuotion.

Her forty daies therefore were no ſooner out, then Mary comes vp to the holy Citie: The rumor of a new King borne at Bethleem, was yet freſh at Ieruſalem, ſince the report of the wiſe-men, and what good newes had this bin for any pick-thank to carry to the Court, Here is the babe, whom the ſtar ſignified, whom the

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the Sages inquired for, whom the Angels proclaimed, whom the ſhepherds talkt of, whom the Scribes and high Preiſts notified, whom Herod ſeeks after? yet vnto that Ieruſalem, which was troubled at the report of his birth, is Chriſt come, and all tongues are ſo lockt vp, that he, which ſent from Ieruſalem to Bethleem to ſeeke him, findes him not, who (as to countermine Herod) is come from Bethleem to Ieruſalem. Dangers that are aloofe of, and but poſſible, may not hinder vs from the dutie of our deuotion: God ſaw it not yet time to let looſe the furie of his aduerſaries, whom he holds vp, like ſome

eager

eager maſtiues, and then onely lets goe, when they ſhall moſt ſhame themſelues, and glorifie him.

Well might the bleſſed Virgin haue wrangled with the law, and challenged an immunitie from all ceremonies of purification; what ſhould I neede purging, which did not conceiue in ſin? This is for thoſe mothers, whoſe births are vncleane, mine is from God, which is puritie it ſelfe: The law of Moſes reaches only to thoſe women, which haue conceiued ſeed, I conceiued not this ſeed, but the Holy Ghoſt in mee: The law extends to the mothers of thoſe ſonnes, which are vnder the law, mine is aboue

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it: But as one, that cared more for her peace, then her priuiledg, and more desired to bee free from offence, then from labour and charge, shee dutifully fulfils the law of that God, whom shee carried in her wombe, and in her armes: Like the mother of him, who though he knew the children of the kingdome free, yet would pay tribute vnto Cæsar: Like the mother of him, whom it behoued to fulfill all righteousnes: And if shee were so officious in ceremonies, as not to admit of any excuse in the very circumstance of her obedience, how much more strict was shee in the maine duties of morality? That soule is fit for the spirituall con-

conception of Christ, that is conscionably scrupulous in obseruing all Gods commandements, whereas he hates all alliance to a negligent, or froward heart.

The law of purification proclaimes our vncleanneſſe: The mother is not allowed after her child-birth to come vnto the Sanctuary, or to touch any hallowed thing, till her ſet time bee expired; What are wee, whoſe very birth infects the mother that beares vs? At laſt, ſhe comes to the Temple, but with ſacrifices, either a lambe, and a pigeon, or turtle, or (in the meaner eſtate) two turtle doues, or yong pigeons: Whereof one is for a burnt

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offring, the other for a ſinne-offring: The one for thanks-giuing, the other for expiation: For expiation of a double ſinne, of the mother, that conceiued, of the childe, that was conceiued. We are all borne ſinners, and it is a iuſt queſtion, whether we doe more infect the world, or the world vs? They are groſſe flatterers of nature, that tell her, ſhee is cleane: If our liues had no ſinne, we bring enough with vs; the very infant, that liues not to ſinne as Adam, yet he ſinn'd in Adam, and is ſinfull in himſelfe. But oh the vnſpeakable mercy of our God! we prouide the ſin, he prouides the remedy: Behold an expiation well neere,

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as early, as our ſinne; the blood of a yong lambe, or doue, yea rather the blood of him, whoſe innocence was repreſented by both, cleanſeth vs preſently from our filthineſſe. Firſt went circumciſion, then came the ſacrifice, that by two holy acts, that which was naturally vnholy, might be hallowed vnto God; Vnder the Goſpell our baptiſme hath the force of both: It does away our corruption by the water of the ſpirit; It applies to vs the ſacrifice of Chriſts blood, whereby wee are clenſed: Oh that wee could magnifie this goodneſſe of our God, which hath not left our very infancy without redreſſe, but hath pro-

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uided ſuch helps, as whereby we may be deliuered from the danger of our hereditary euils.

Such is the fauorable reſpect of our wiſe God, that he would not haue vs vndoe our ſelues with deuotion, the ſeruice he requires of vs is ruled by our abilities: Euery poore mother was not able to bring a lambe for her offring, there was none ſo poore, but might procure a paire of turtles or pigeons. Theſe doth God both preſcribe, and accept from poorer hands, no leſſe, then the beaſts of a thouſand mountaines; Hee lookes for ſomewhat of euery one, not of euery one alike: Since it is hee, that makes differences of abilities (to whom

whom it were as eaſie to make all rich) his mercy will make no difference in the acceptation: The truth and heartineſſe of obedience is that, which he will crowne in his meaneſt ſeruants: A mite from the poore widow is more worth to him, then the talents of the wealthy.

After all the preſents of thoſe Eaſterne worſhippers (who intended rather homage, then ditation) the bleſſed Virgin comes in the forme of pouerty with her two doues vnto God; ſhe could not without ſome charge lye all this while at Bethleem, ſhe could not without charge trauell from Bethleem to Ieruſalem; Her offring confeſſeth her penury; The

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beſt are not euer the wealthieſt: Who can deſpiſe any one for want, when the mother of Chriſt was not rich enough to bring a lambe for her purification? Wee may be as happy in ruſſet, as in tiſſue.

While the bleſſed VIRGIN brought her ſon into the Temple, with that paire of doues, here were more doues then a paire: They, for whoſe ſake that offring was brought, were more doues, then the doues that were brought for that offring: Her ſonne, for whom ſhee brought that doue to be ſacrificed, was that ſacrifice, which the doue repreſented: There was nothing in him, but perfection of innocence,

cence, and the oblation of him is that, whereby all mothers and ſonnes are fully purified: Since in our ſelues we cannot be innocent, happy are we, if we can haue the ſpotleſſe doue ſacrificed for vs to make vs innocent in him.

The bleſſed Vigin had more buſineſſe in the Temple then her owne; ſhee came, as to purifie her ſelfe, ſo to preſent her ſonne: Euery male, that firſt opened the wombe was holy vnto the Lord: He that was the ſonne of God by eternall generation before times, and by miraculous conception in time, was alſo by common courſe of nature conſecrate vnto God: It was

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was fit the holy mother ſhould preſent God with his own: Her firſt borne was the firſt borne of all creatures: It was he, whoſe Temple it was, that he was preſented in, to whom all the firſt borne of all creatures were conſecrated, by whom they were accepted, and now is he brought in his mothers armes to his own houſe, and as man is preſented to himſelf as God: If Moſes had neuer written law of Gods ſpeciall propriety in the firſt borne, this ſonne of Gods eſſence and loue had taken poſſeſſion of the Temple; His right had bin a perfect law to himſelfe: Now his obedience to that law, which himſelfe had giuen, doth no leſſe

call

call him thither, then the challenge of his peculiar intereſt.

He that was the Lord of all creatures (euer ſince hee ſtroke the firſt borne of the Ægyptians) requires the firſt male of all creatures, both man and beaſt, to be dedicated to him; wherein God cauſed a miraculous euent to ſecond nature, which ſeemes to challenge the firſt and beſt for the maker: By this rule, God ſhould haue had his ſeruice done onely by the heyres of Iſrael: But ſince God for the honor and remuneration of LEVI, had choſen out that Tribe to miniſter vnto him, now the firſt borne of all Iſrael muſt be preſented to God, as his due, but by allow-

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allowance redeemed to their parents: As for beasts, the first male of the cleane beasts must bee sacrificed, of vncleane exchanged for a price: So much moralitie is there in this constitution of God, that the best of all kindes is fit to be consecrated to the Lord of all. Euery thing we haue is too good for vs, if we thinke any thing wee haue too good for him.

How glorious did the Temple now seeme, that the owner was within the walls of it? Now was the houre, and guest come, in regard whereof the second Temple should surpasse the first: This was his house built for him, dedicated to him: There had

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had hee dwelt long in his ſpirituall preſence, in his typicall: There was nothing either placed, or done within thoſe walls, whereby he was not reſembled, and now the body of thoſe ſhadowes is come, & preſents himſelfe, where hee had bin euer repreſented: Ieruſalem is now euery where; There is no Church, no Chriſtian heart, which is not a Temple of the liuing God: There is no Temple of God, wherein Chriſt is not preſented to his father: Looke vpon him (O God) in whom, thou art well pleaſed, and in him, and for him be well pleaſed with vs.

Vnder the Goſpell we are all firſt borne, all heires: Euery ſoule

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ſoule is to bee holy vnto the Lord, we are a royall generation, an holy preiſthood: Our baptiſme as it is our circumciſion, and our ſacrifice of purification, ſo is it alſo our preſentation vnto God: Nothing can become vs but holineſſe. O God, to whom we are deuoted, ſerue thy ſelfe of vs, glorifie thy ſelfe by vs, till we ſhall by thee be glorified with thee.

HEROD

HEROD and the INFANTS.

WEL might theſe wiſe men haue ſuſpected Herods ſecrecy; If hee had ment well, what needed that whiſpering? That which they publiſhed in the ſtreets, he asks in his priuy chamber; yet they not miſdoubting his intention, purpoſe to fulfill his charge: It could not in their apprehenſion but bee much

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much honor to them, to make their ſucceſs knowne, that now both King and people might ſee, it was not fancie that led them, but an aſſured reuelation: That God, which brought them thither, diuerted them, and cauſed their eyes ſhut to guide them the beſt way home.

Theſe Sages made a happy voyage: For now they grew into further acquaintance with God: They are honored with a ſecond meſſenger from heauen: They ſaw the ſtarre in the way, the Angell in their bed: The ſtarre guided their iourney vnto Chriſt, the Angell directed their returne: They ſaw the ſtarre by day, a viſion by night: God ſpake

ſpake to their eyes by the ſtar, he ſpeaks to their heart by a dream: No doubt, they had left much noiſe of Chriſt behinde them: They, that did ſo publiſh his birth by their inquiry at Ieruſalem, could not be ſilent, when they found him at Bethleem: If they had returned by Herod, I feare they had come ſhort home; Hee that ment death to the babe for the name of a King, could meane nó other to thoſe, that honored and proclaimed a new King, and erected a throne beſides his: They had done what they came for; and now that God, whoſe buſineſſe they came about, takes order at once for his ſonnes ſafety, and

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for theirs: God, which is perfection it ſelfe, neuer begins any buſines, but he makes an end, & ends happily; When our waies are his, there is no danger of miſcariage.

Well did theſe wiſe-men know the difference, as of ſtars, ſo of dreames; they had learn't to diſtinguiſh betweene the naturall and diuine, and once apprehending God in their ſleepe, they follow him waking, and returne another way. They were no ſubiects to Herod, his command preſſed them ſo much the leſſe, or if the being within his dominions had beene no leſſe bond, then natiue ſubiection, yet where God did countermand Herod,

Herod, there could be no queſtion, whom to obey: They ſay not, we are in a ſtrange country, Herod may meet with vs, it can be no leſſe then death to mocke him in his owne territories, but cheerfully put themſelues vpon the way, and truſt God with the ſucceſſe: Where men command with God, wee muſt obey men for God, and God in men, when againſt him, the beſt obedience is to deny obedience, and to turne our backs vpon Herod.

The wiſe-men are ſafely arriued in the Eaſt, & fill the world full of expectation, as themſelues are full of wonder: IOSEPH and MARY are returned with the babe to that Ieruſalem, where

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the wiſe-men had inquired for his birth. The Citie was doubtleſſe ſtill full of that rumor, and litle thinks, that he, whom they talke of, was ſo neere them: From thence they are, at leaſt, in their way to Nazareth, where they purpoſe their abode: God preuents them by his Angell, and ſends them for ſafety into Ægypt; Ioſeph was not wont to be ſo full of viſions: It was not long ſince the Angell appeared vnto him to iuſtifie the innocency of the mother, and the deity of the ſonne; now he appeares for the preſeruation of both, & a preſeruation by flight: Could Ioſeph now chooſe, but thinke, Is this the King, that muſt

muſt ſaue Iſrael, that needs to be ſaued by me? If he be the ſon of God, how is he ſubiect to the violence of men? How is hee Almighty, that muſt ſaue himſelfe by flight? or how muſt he flie to ſaue himſelfe out of that land, which he comes to ſaue? But faithfull Ioſeph hauing bin once tutored by the Angell, and hauing heard, what the wiſemen ſaid of the ſtarre, what SIMEON and ANNA ſaid in the Temple, labours not ſo much to reconcile his thoughts, as to ſubiect them, and as one, that knew it ſafer to ſuppreſs doubts, then to aſſoile them, can beleeue, what hee vnderſtands not, and can wonder, where

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he cannot comprehend.

Oh ſtrange condition of the King of all the world! He could not be borne in a baſer eſtate, yet euen this he cannot enioy with ſafety. There was no roome for him in Bethleem, there will be no roome for him in Iudea: He is no ſooner come to his owne, then hee muſt flie from them; that he may ſaue them, hee muſt auoide them: Had it not bin eaſie for thee (O Sauiour) to haue acquit thy ſelfe from Herod, a thouſand wayes? What could an arme of fleſh haue done againſt the God of ſpirits? What had it bin for thee to haue ſent Herod fiue yeeres ſooner vnto his place? what to haue commanded

manded fire from heauen on thoſe, that ſhould haue come to apprehend thee? or to haue bidden the earth to receiue them aliue, whom ſhee ment to ſwallow dead? We ſuffer miſery, becauſe wee muſt, thou, becauſe thou wouldeſt: The ſame will that brought thee from heauen into earth, ſends thee from Iury to Ægypt; as thou wouldſt be borne meane and miſerable, ſo thou wouldſt liue ſubiect to humane vexations, that thou, which haſt taught vs, how good it is to beare the yoke euen in our youth, mightſt ſanctifie to vs early afflictions. Or whether (O Father) ſince it was the purpoſe of thy wiſdom to manifeſt

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thy Sonne by degrees vnto the world, was it thy will thus to hide him for a time, vnder our infirmitie? and what other is our condition? we are no ſooner borne thine, then wee are perſecuted. If the Church trauell, and bring forth a male, ſhee is in danger of the Dragons ſtreames: What doe the members complaine of the ſame meaſure, which was offred to the head? both our births are accompanied with teares.

Euen of thoſe, whoſe mature age is full of trouble, yet the infancy is commonly quiet, but here life and toyle began together. O bleſsed Virgin! euen already did the ſword begin to peirce

peirce thy ſoule: Thou which wert forced to beare thy Sonne in thy wombe from Nazareth to Bethleem, muſt now beare him in thy armes from Iury into Ægypt; yet couldſt thou not complaine of the way, whileſt thy Sauiour was with thee; His preſence alone was able to make the ſtable a temple, Ægypt a paradiſe, the way more pleaſing then reſt. But whither then? O whither doeſt thou carry that bleſsed burthen, by which thy ſelfe and the world are vpholden? To Ægypt, the ſlaughterhouſe of Gods people, the furnace of Iſraels ancient affliction, the ſinke of the world: *Out of Ægypt haue I called my ſonne* (ſaith God)

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God). That thou calldſt thy Sonne out of Ægypt, O God, is no maruell; It is a maruell, that thou call'dſt him into Ægypt; but that wee know, all earths are thine, and all places and men are like figures vpon a table, ſuch as thy diſpoſition makes them: What a change is here? Iſrael the firſt borne of God, flies out of Ægypt into the promiſed land of Iudea; Chriſt the firſt borne of all creatures flies from Iudea into Ægypt: Ægypt is become the Sanctuary, Iudea the Inquiſition-houſe of the Sonne of God: He, that is euery where the ſame, makes all places alike to his: Hee makes the fiery furnace a gallery of plea-

pleaſure, the Lyons denne an houſe of defence, the Whales belly a lodging chamber, Ægypt an harbour.

He flees, that was able to preſerue himſelfe from danger, to teach vs, how lawfully we may flee from thoſe dangers, we cannot auoide otherwiſe; It is a thankleſs fortitude to offer our throat vnto the knife: He, that came to dye for vs, fled for his owne preſeruation, and hath bid vs follow him; *When they perſecute you in one Citie, flee into another*: We haue but the vſe of our liues, and we are bound to huſband them to the beſt aduantage of God and his Church: God hath made vs, not as butts to be perpe-

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perpetually ſhot at, but as the marks of rouers moueable, as the winde & ſun may beſt ſerue.

It was warrant enough for Ioſeph and Mary that God commands them to flee, yet ſo familiar is God growne with his approued ſeruants, that hee giues them the reaſon of his commanded flight: (*For Herod will ſeeke the yong childe to deſtroy him*): What wicked men will doe, what they would do, is knowne vnto God before hand: He that is ſo infinitely wiſe to know the deſignes of his enemies before they are, could as eaſily preuent them, that they might not be, but he lets them runne on in their own courſes, that he may fetch glory to

to himſelfe out of their wickednesse.

Good IOSEPH hauing this charge in the night, ſtaies not till the morning; no ſooner had God ſaid *Ariſe*, then he ſtarts vp, and ſets forward: It was not diffidence, but obedience that did ſo haſten his departure; The charge was direct, the buſineſſe important: He dares not linger for the light, but breaks his reſt for the iourney, and taking vantage of the darke, departs toward Ægypt: How knew he this occaſion would abide any delay? We cannot be too ſpeedy in the execution of Gods commands, we may be too late: Here was no treaſure to hide, no hangings

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to take down, no lands to ſecure; The poore Carpenter needs doe no more, but lock the dores, and away: Hee goes lightly, that wants a lode: If there bee more pleaſure in abundance, there is more ſecuritie in a meane eſtate: The Buſtard or the Oſtridge, when he is purſued, can hardly get vpon his wings, whereas the Larke mounts with eaſe; The rich hath not ſo much aduantage of the poore in the enioying, as the poore hath of the rich in leauing.

Now is Ioſeph come downe into Ægypt: Ægypt was beholden to the name, as that whereto it did owe no leſſe then their vniuerſall preſeruation: Well might

might it repay this act of hoſpitalitie to that name and blood: The going downe into Ægypt had not ſo much difficultie, as the ſtaying there: Their abſence from their country was litle better, then a baniſhment; but what was this other, then to ſerue a prentiſhip in the houſe of bondage? To be any where ſaue at home, was irkeſome, but to be in Ægypt ſo many yeeres amongſt idolatrous pagans, muſt needs be painfull to religious hearts: The command of their God, & the preſence of Chriſt makes amends for all: How long ſhould they haue thought it to ſee the Temple of God, if they had not had the God of the Temple with them?

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them? How long to preſent their ſacrifices at the Altar of God, if they had not had him with them, which made all ſacrifices accepted, and which did accept the ſacrifice of their hearts?

Herod was ſubtle in mocking the wiſe-men, whiles he promiſed to worſhip him, whom he ment to kill; now God makes the wiſe-men to mock him in diſappointing his expectation: It is iuſt with God to puniſh thoſe, which would beguile others with illuſion: Great ſpirits are ſo much more impatient of diſgrace; How did Herod now rage and fret, and vainly wiſh to haue met with thoſe falſe ſpies, and tells, with what torments he would

would reuenge their trechery, & curſes himſelf for truſting ſtrangers in ſo important a buſines?

The tyrants ſuſpition would not let him reſt long: Ere many daies hee ſends to inquire of them, whom he ſent to inquire of Chriſt. The notice of their ſecret departure increaſeth his ielouſie, and now his anger runs mad, and his feare proues deſperate: All the infants of Bethleem ſhal bleed for this one; And (that he may make ſure worke) he cuts out to himſelf large meaſures both of time, and place: It was but very lately that the ſtar appeared, that the wiſe-men re appeared not: They asked for him, that was borne, they did

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not name, when he was borne: Herod for more ſecuritie ouer-reaches their time, and fetches into the ſlaughter, all the children of two yeeres age: The Preiſts & Scribes had told him, the towne of Bethleem muſt bee the place of the Meſſia's natiuity: He fetches in all the children of the coaſts adioyning; yea his own ſhall for the time be a Bethleemite: A tyrannous guiltineſſe neuer thinks it ſelfe ſafe, but euer ſeeks to aſſure it ſelfe in the exceſſe of cruelty: Doubtleſſe he, which ſo priuily inquired for Chriſt, did as ſecretly brew this maſſacre: The mothers were ſet with their children on their laps, feeding them with the breſt, or

or talking to them in the familiar language of their loue, when ſuddenly the executioner ruſhes in, and ſnatches them from their armes, and at once pulling forth his cõmiſſion & his knife, without regard to ſhrikes or teares, murthers the innocent babe, and leaues the paſſionate mother in a meane betweene madnes and death. What curſing of Herod? what wringing of hands? what condoling? what exclaiming was now in the ſtreets of Bethleem?

O bloody Herod, that couldſt ſacrifice ſo many harmleſſe liues to thine ambition! What could thoſe infants haue done? If it were thy perſon, whereof thou

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wert affraid, what liklyhood was it, thou couldſt liue, till thoſe ſucklings might endanger thee? This newes might affect thy ſucceſſors, it could not concerne thee, if the heat of an impotent and furious enuie had not made thee thirſty of blood: It is not long, that thou ſhalt enioy this cruelty; After a few hatefull yeeres thy ſoule ſhall feele the weight of ſo many innocents, of ſo many iuſt curſes.

He, for whoſe ſake thou killdſt ſo many, ſhall thee ſtrike with death, and then what wouldſt thou haue giuen to haue bin as one of thoſe infants whom thou murthereſt? In the meane time, when thine executioners returned,

ned, and told thee of their vnpartiall diſpatch, thou ſmiledſt to thinke, how thou hadſt defeated thy riuall, and beguiled the ſtarre, and deluded the propheſies; whiles God in heauen, and his Sonne on earth laugh thee to ſcorne, and make thy rage an occaſion of further glory to him, whom thou menteſt to ſuppreſs.

He that could take away the liues of others, cannot protract his owne: Herod is now ſent home; The coaſt is cleare for the return of that holy family; Now God calls them from their exile: Chriſt and his mother had not ſtayed ſo long out of the confines of the reputed viſible Church, but to teach vs continuance

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nuance vnder the croſſe: Sometimes God ſees it good for vs not to ſip of the cup of affliction, but to make a diet-drinke of it, for conſtant and common vſe: If he allow vs no other liquor for many yeeres, we muſt take it off cheerfully, and know, that it is but the meaſure of our betters.

Ioseph and Mary ſtirre not without a command; their departure, ſtay, remoouall is ordred by the voice of God: If Ægypt had beene more tedious vnto them, they durſt not moue their foote, till they were bidden: It is good in our owne buſineſſe to follow reaſon, or cuſtom, but in Gods buſineſſe, if we haue any other guide but him-

himſelfe, we preſume, & cannot expect a bleſſing.

O the wonderfull diſpenſation of God in concealing of himſelfe from men! Chriſt was now ſome fiue yeere old; hee beares himſelfe as an infant, and knowing all things, neither takes nor giues notice of ought concerning his remoouall, and diſpoſing, but appoints that to be done by his Angell, which the Angell could not haue done, but by him: Since hee would take our nature, he would be a perfect childe, ſuppreſſing the manifeſtation & exerciſe of that Godhead, whereto that infant nature was conioyned. Euen ſo, O Sauiour, the humilitie of thine infancy

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infancy was answerable to that of thy birth: The more thou hidest and abasest thy selfe for vs, the more should we magnifie thee, the more should we deiect our selues for thee.

Vnto Thee with the Father & the Holy Ghost be all honor and glory now and for euer.

Amen.

FINIS.